Second Edition

of

"INCREDIBLE TALES"

of some of the

Antelope Valley Pioneers

Dedicated
to
My Loyal and Devoted Wife
VIOLA FOSTER GORDON
December 23, 1897 - July 8, 1973

Compiled with

Love and Affection

for all of the

Antelope Valley Pioneers

by

J. Shelton Gordon
September 1, 1973
Palmdale, California

INTRODUCTION

September 1, 1973

Dear Friends:

It has now been almost two years since the first edition of "Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers" was published.

Many stories and letters came to me long after this first book was printed, so it seemed only fair and reasonable to add to them and print a Second Edition. These letters and stories in some cases duplicate the happenings mentioned in the first edition, but from a different viewpoint. Thus these stories are very interesting reading. Personally, I feel that we have surpassed the first edition in this second effort. It is sincerely hoped that this work has filled a need. As to my knowledge this has been the only attempt to get together articles, letters and stories of our pioneers in one book. However, the real value of these collections has been their authenticity. These stories and letters have been for the most part by the participants themselves, or a first hand report by a contemporary person.

Personally, I have always had a great deal of respect for the hardy people that "homesteaded" this great country of ours. My mother as a girl with her father's family traveled by covered wagon from Nebraska to the Kansas Territory. They homesteaded a farm in Kansas. My mother took up a homestead herself when she was 21 years old. My wife's father and mother as a very young married couple pioneered in Ohio near Van Vert - cleared off enough of the "green woods" to build a log cabin, gradually cleared off the rest of the land, developed "The Silver Dawn" stock farm, struck oil, raised a fine family, then retired comfortably in Pasadena. Real Pioneers!

The pioneers of Antelope Valley are especially interesting and important as this area has been the "Last Frontier", at least of Southern California.

Many of these families have come from the San Gabriel Valley and around Pasadena. Pasadena was my home town. My family came to California in 1900 from Chicago, and I had my fifth birthday in that then new country.

So in making this historical search of Antelope Valley, I have come across families and names of families that I know or knew in Pasadena. Palmdale in many ways is similar to Pasadena in its early days. But there also have been people from all over the United States and from many foreign countries that have made up the growing population here. These courageous, staunch and perservering people from many places are the ones that have laid the foundations for a great, inspiring and prosperous Antelope Valley.

Personally, my appreciation, respect and sincere thanks is without limit. Antelope Valley has been good to us; the people have been good to us; for all of which we are eternally grateful.

Again in looking over the pages of the Second Edition, I realize that only the surface has been touched. Much more could have been done. Many more could have responded. Yet we have a good cross-section and description of past events.

There is a real lesson here to be observed and learned. These people stood on their own feet. It was "root, hog, or die". They did not have a Welfare Department to run to for aid if they "stubbed their toe". It was a

case of "sink or swim" - "survive or perish". They had "guts and gumption".

It is sincerely hoped that when our young people, especially, read these letters and stories that they will be inspired by the stories of these Pioneers - that they too will emulate this passing generation, developing also Resourcefulness, Courage, Perserverance and Honor, which it appears they will sorely need in the years ahead.

So my dear friends of the past, present and future, if I have filled a need I am happy. If I have helped make Antelope Valley a better, cleaner and more decent place to live, my purpose has been fulfilled.

I am pleased that I had the inspiration from my loving, loyal and devoted wife, Viola Foster Gordon, to complete this Second Edition.

With "Love and Affection" to all.

Sincerely,

J. Shelton Gordon

Palmdale Board of Realtors Inc. 16th Annual Installation Dinner, Saturday, December 2, 1972. Presentation to J. Shelton Gordon, recipient of the 1972 Realtor of the Year Award by Jeannette J. Baust, recipient of the 1971 Realtor of the Year Award and retiring president.

Remarks by Jeannette Baust:

There is no way that I can read off the important accomplishments of this year's choice for Realtor of the Year of 1972, without you all knowing the identity of him right away. This is a life of inspiration to us all. If we can accomplish half as much in a comparable life span, we too would belong in the history books of California.

Our recipient was born in Chicago June 4th, 1896. His family moved to California in 1900. He attended the Pasadena schools and graduated from Pasadena High School in 1916. He became active in church work and in World War I served as a war worker as Y. M. C. A. Secretary, before joining the U. S. Naval Medical Corps in 1918. Thus he served his country in two capacities.

After the war he married a high school sweetheart, Viola Foster, on August 16, 1920. (Viola had graduated May 12, 1920 from the University of California at Berkley, with honors). Shelton and Viola entered the University of Chicago that fall as medical students. In 1923 they changed course and returned to Pasadena. On January 1, 1924, J. Shelton Gordon started his own General Contracting business. But he always found time to be active in church, community and the American Legion. He was an advocate of the Contractor's License Law. His license, No. 183, is still active. In 1932 he helped form the Building Contractors Association, now the B. I. A. of California. Was Awarded Lifetime State Directorship in the B. I. A. May 29, 1968.

He continued in private construction work until World War II, then served his country again as a Construction Superintendent (for the larger general contractors) building military projects for the U. S. Corps of Engineers. When the war was closing and the projects built, he returned to Pasadena in 1944 and resumed private construction work in Southern California and became very busy.

In 1945, he and his lovely wife began purchasing property in the Palmdale area, opening a branch construction office which was managed by his son, John S. Gordon, Jr. (as soon as he was discharged from the U. S. Airforce). However, the Pasadena office was active until 1955. In the meantime, the Gordons had moved to Palmdale. They remodeled and rebuilt the home in which they now live in Ana Verde Hills. On April 23, 1967, the house was partly destroyed by fire. It was completely rebuilt and replanned and finished August 23, 1967. Viola and Shelton celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary on August 16, 1970 at their newly completed home, "El Rancho Del Lago Lindo". The construction firm of father and son prospered. They built fine homes, commercial buildings, apartments, schools and various projects for the aircraft companies at Plant 42. (They built about half of the buildings at Palmdale High School). In 1962 he

gradually phased out of the building business. In September 1961 John and Henry Anthony formed a partnership of Anthony and Gordon General Insurance. Shelton kept the Real Estate part of the business and is still very active.

Through the Palmdale years, Shelton was active in community affairs. Was Charter Member of the A. V. Kiwanis Club, member of the First Methodist Church of Palmdale, joined the Palmdale Chamber of Commerce in 1945, became President of the Chamber of Commerce in 1957. He accomplished as President, with the help of others, joint use of Plant 42 for commercial aircraft until Fox Airfield was built. He appeared before the C. A. A. in Washington D. C. asking for permission for Pacific Airways to use Plant 42 and the request was granted. He was a member of the Highway No. 6 Committee, the forerunner of the present freeway committee, was active in obtaining Buffer Zone about the Palmdale Airport, active in getting hillside area south and west of Palmdale zoned one house to the acre, thus stopping the illegal removal of decomposed granite from Ana Verde Hills. He was Chamber of Commerce Chairman of Street Improvement Committee and accomplished getting curb and gutter installation many places in Palmdale as well as on Sixth Street, from East Avenue R to Palmdale Boulevard, both sides of the street. He received the Distinguished Citizen Award, 1956-1957 as Chairman of the Street Improvement Committee. With others he encouraged and helped the F. A. A. to build and settle in Palmdale. Viola was active in the Woman's Club, Republican Woman's Club, Methodist Church, and was President in 1956 and 1957 of the A. V. Chapter Zonta International.

In 1957, Shelton helped formulate the Antelope Valley Progress Association, now the A. V. Board of Trade. He helped form the groups from the Board of Trade that made yearly trips to Washington D. C. (at their own expense) to call on the Defense Department, Senators and Congressmen to ask concentration of Governmental interest in the Antelope Valley. Much was accomplished. He served as President of the Board of Trade part of 1957 and all of 1964. Was Director 15 years. Received Antelope Valley Board of Trade Distinguished Service Award, 1957-1972, on September 22, 1972.

In 1964 he received the Award of Merit from the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors which was presented by Warren M. Dorn, Supervisor of the Fifth District. He has served on numerous committees of the Palmdale Board of Realtors and is a Charter Member of our board. Was 1962 Member of the Board and over the years Map Chairman. Has represented the P. B. O. R. at the Board of Trade and the Palmdale Chamber of Commerce.

In 1971 Shelton compiled with "Love and Affection", "Incredible Tales, stories, letters and Reminiscences of some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers". "This book being dedicated to those courageous, staunch and perservering people who have laid the foundation for this great and prosperous Antelope Valley". Shelton was certainly describing himself, his fabulous wife, his energetic daughter, Barbara, and his charming son, John. Now, because of popular demand, a second edition of Incredible Tales is being prepared.

Ladies and Gentlemen: May I present to you The Realtor of the Year 1972, Mr. History, J. Shelton Gordon.

P.S. J. Shelton Gordon was completely surprised and was so overcome that all he could do was to say thank you with tears in this eyes. Thank you. Thank you.

Award presented by Jeannette J. Baust, 1971 Realtor of the Year, and 1972 Retiring President, P.B.O.R.

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We feel that the subject matter in the pictures included in the story more than makes up for the lack of quality so....

Please do not be too harsh in your evaluation of the photo reproductions offered in this compilation. Most of the source photographs were either from 'box brownie' equipment handled by amateurs or poorly reproduced old newspaper clippings.

Add to this the factor of 25 to 50 years of age and you come up with a printer's headache. We have done the best we could with the source material...your indulgence please.

Victoria Maris
38130 N. 6th St. E.
Palmdale, CA 93550
Phone 947-3887

SECURITY PACIFIC NATIONAL BANK

HEAD OFFICE · MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS DEPARTMENT, 312 WEST FIFTH STREET

MAILING ADDRESS: P. O. BOX 2097, TERMINAL ANNEX, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90051

February 15, 1973

Mr. V.S. Gordon
38144 6th Street
East Palmdale, Calif.

Dear Mr. Gordon,

On my recent visit to Lancaster Rotary Club, I heard favourable comments about your new book-memoirs of your life in Antelope Valley.

Please send me a copy, to be included into our historical collection, to the following address:

V.R. Plukas, 11-26
Bank Historian,
Security Pacific National Bank
P.O. Box 2097, Terminal Annex
Los Angeles, Calif. 90054

With best wishes,

V.R. Plukas

Victor R. Plukas
Bank Historian

December 16, 1971

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
38144 - 6th Street East
Palmdale, CA 93550

Dear Shelton:

Thank you for the copy of "Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of Some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers." Congratulations on a magnificient job!

You have provided a real service to the residents of the Antelope Valley - both new and old - by preserving the flavor and history of this great area.

This book will be read and re-read for many years to come. My family joins with me in sending our thanks. Good luck on your proposed sequel.

Best wishes to you and your family for a joyous holiday season.

Most sincerely,

Robert C. Taylor

Robert C. Taylor
Bob's Barber Shop
38418 - 10th Street East
Palmdale, CA

RCT:bt

County of Los Angeles
Office of the Sheriff

PETER J. PITCHESS, SHERIFF

Los Angeles, California 90012

File No. 1172-28

January 28, 1972

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
38144 - 6th Street East
Palmdale, California 93550

Dear Mr. Gordon:

First, let me apologize for the time lapse in thanking you for the copy of "Incredible Tales of the Antelope Valley Pioneers". As a relative "newcomer" to the Valley, I found your publication to be most entertaining and informative.

So many of these memories would have been lost had it not been for this project of yours and I would like to take this opportunity to commend you for your efforts. I also hope that you will be able to gather enough additional tales and memories to publish a second edition in the near future. Should you do so, we would certainly appreciate receiving a copy of it.

We have the copy you sent us available for the personnel at the Station to read and those who have had the opportunity to do so have, like myself, thoroughly enjoyed it.

Again let me express my sincere appreciation to you for your most generous gesture and wish you every success in the future.

With sincere regards,

PETER J. PITCHESS, SHERIFF

Leo Herendeen

Leonard K. Herendeen, Captain
Commander, Antelope Valley Station

ANTELOPE VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

45024 NORTH THIRD STREET EAST
LANCASTER, CALIFORNIA 93534
(805) 948-7655

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DISTRICT SUPERINTENDENT

ROBERT F. KELLEY
ASSISTANT SUPERINTENDENT
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EDWARD J. WRIGHT

February 3, 1972

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
650 West Lago Lindo Road
Palmdale, California 93550

Dear Mr. Gordon:

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, the administration, faculty and pupils of the Antelope Valley Union High School District, may I thank you for your recent contribution of two copies of Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of Some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers. I have had an opportunity to look at this material and feel that it will be excellent literature to have available to the young people attending Palmdale High School since it will give them an opportunity to become better acquainted with the historical foundations of the Antelope Valley.

The Board of Trustees of the Antelope Valley Union High School District did officially accept these books at their regularly scheduled meeting on February 2, 1972.

I agree wholeheartedly with Mr. Fisher, the Principal of Palmdale High School, that these books will be a valuable asset to our library and the young people attending Palmdale High School will enjoy reading about the early days of their community.

Thank you again for your generous contribution of these two books and I particularly appreciate your sending me a copy at the district office. It is a wonderful program offered to the young people but also are willing to contribute personally of their time, energies, or materials to the educational program. Certainly this does not go unnoticed or unappreciated.

Sincerely yours,

Raymond W. Barnes

Raymond W. Barnes
Superintendent

RWB:sp

Copy: Mr. Rex Fisher

WILLIAM S. GELLER
COUNTY LIBRARIAN

COUNTY OF LOS ANGELES
PUBLIC LIBRARY
320 WEST TEMPLE STREET
POST OFFICE BOX 111
LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA 90053
MADISON 8-9211

BEN BAILEY
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ASST. COUNTY LIBRARIAN
TECHNICAL SERVICES

JAMES R. ROBB
ADMINISTRATIVE DEPUTY

February 10, 1972

Mr. & Mrs. J. Sheldon Gordon
38144 6th St. E
Palmdale, Calif. 93550

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Gordon:

It is with pleasure that I thank you for the gift of your book, Incredible tales, stories, letters and reminiscences of some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers to the Palmdale Library. Your collection makes fascinating reading for I, a native son, well remember family outings to the Valley. It is hoped that others will add their reminiscences to your collection and that more volumes will be published.

The copy presented to the Palmdale Library is being commercially rebound to protect it in the great usage I know it will have. It is also being made reference so it will be readily available for reading and research by adults and students.

You have my gratitude and that of the Staff for this thoughtful and noteworthy gift.

Very truly yours,

William S. Geller

William S. Geller
County Librarian

WSG:dw

cc: Supervisor Dorn
Barbara Falconer, Regional Administrator
Mrs. Elaine Warren, Palmdale Librarian

Letter from Denver F. Cook, Title Insurance and Trust Co.

John Shelton,
I will enjoy very much your Incredible Tales. I saw a copy at Art Etz' place and was a bit rude in that I read it instead of talking to my host.
Thank you for adding a valuable addition to my library.

****

From Kate S. Valenta.

Thanks for the 'Tales of Antelope Valley'. I have read with great pleasure the many stories written by the 'Old Timers', but I think your article describing the friendly manner which prevailed among relatives and friends in those days plainly shows the lack of togetherness of today. Let's HOPE for the return of some of those good times.

****

Palmdale School District
38260 NORTH 10TH STREET EAST
PHONE WINDSOR 7-7191 • P. O. BOX 218
PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA

OFFICE OF THE SUPERINTENDENT

December 16, 1971

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
38144 North Sixth Street East
Palmdale, California

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Thank you for the copy of your collection of reminiscences of some of the "old timers" of the Antelope Valley. It is the kind of collection that many people would think would be a good idea, but few would tackle. You and your wife are to be congratulated.

I have placed it in our District Library where it will be available for use by teachers and students.

Sincerely,

Ralph J. Lovik

Ralph J. Lovik
District Superintendent

RJL/jan

Letter from Ruth & Joe Hunt

Dear Friends,

I have delayed writing to thank you for the copy of "Incredible Tales". One reason I delayed is that I have a file of Antelope Valley history in pictures and articles clipped from newspapers and references in other booklets. I had thought I'd go through these and find some you might wish to add to the already fine collection. In the meantime I do want you to know how very much Joe and I have enjoyed reading the accounts. We are both particularly interested in it - even though we do not rate as old-timers. I think we are pioneers by nature.

****

PALMDALE HIGH SCHOOL

January 25, 1972

MEMORANDUM

TO: Mr. Barnes

FROM: Rex L. Fisher

During the Christmas Vacation I read in the Antelope Valley Press about a book of Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers that had been compiled by J. Shelton Gordon.

Upon contact with Mr. Gordon, he indicated that he would like to donate two copies to the Palmdale High School Library.

I have read the total 149 pages and feel the two books would be a valuable asset to our library.

Would you please ask our Board of Trustees to accept these two books with an appropriate thank you to Mr. Gordon.

Rex L. Fisher
Principal
RLF:mrk

cc: Mr. J. Shelton Gordon ✓
Mrs. Dorothy Collins, Librarian

Letter from Miss Anne L. Shepard

What a happy Christmas surprise is the compilation of the many write-ups you received re pioneer days in Palmdale! My face is very red as I realize that I failed you!

I congratulate you upon securing such a wide-spread response. I know you have given a great deal of pleasure to many by reviving in their memory the experiences recorded.

****

From Glen & Dorene Settle

Many, many thanks for sending us a copy of your new book. You are wonderful to have started, continued, and finished such a monumental task of compiling all the Palmdale and South Antelope Valley memoirs. This project was a needed one and only future historians will fully appreciate your efforts. Present historians do appreciate your efforts and realize the potential as well as the work involved. You are to be highly commended.

****

From Ruth & Earl Jones

Words can't express our gratitude and thanks for the book of The Stories of South Antelope Valley Pioneers that you sent us. It is so interesting, even though I have not nearly finished it - haven't had much chance as Earl has monopolized it.

You certainly accomplished a wonderful task and a lasting record to many, many happenings and events and growth of our area. I'm sure everyone is very grateful to you both. I know we are.

****

Letter from Ruth E. Kinsman

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Mere words can't express my surprise and pleasure at receiving your anthology of Antelope Valley pioneers' reminisences. I was thrilled to find my Memories of Palmdale among them. Many of the other stories recall familiar places and names to me. I now feel inspired to write the saga of the Martin family who first came into the valley in 1890. I will send this to you as soon after the holidays as I can get it ready.

P.S. Mr. Gordon, please excuse errors in printing as my wife Ruth is blind.

F.M. Kinsman

****

From Lester and Pauline Bright

Dear Shelton and Viola:

Lester and I want to thank you for the beautiful memoirs of Palmdale. Reading through the pages brought back many happy times we had in those early days. Still remember the good times we had at your home.

****

From R. C. Primmer

I received from you, a few days ago, a copy of the Old Timers' experiences, memories, etc., and was really surprised with the scope of this project. Please accept my thanks for this copy, and I was glad I could add my "two bits worth" to it.

August 1, 1973

Copies of letters and thank you notes from some of the recipients of the First Edition of "Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminisences of Some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers" by J. Shelton Gordon, Published October 1, 1971.

****

Letter from Elaine Warren, Palmdale Librarian, dated April 4, 1972.

My dear Mr. Gordon,

Thank you so much for the three additional copies of "Incredible Tales -." I am deeply grateful to you for making this valuable source material available to our other libraries.

The Palmdale Library will cherish our own copy when it arrives with its protective binding.

****

Letter from Arnold & Martha Munz.

My Dear Friends,

I received your lovely book that you sent me and needless to say I am enjoying reading it immensely.

There sure are some interesting letters in there. There are only so few of us old timers left. It is hard for the younger generations to realize what their parents and grandparents went through to scratch out a living, but after all is said and done I believe the former generations were as happy if not happier than the newer generations are.

****

From Palmdale Woman's Club.

Thank you for your thoughtfulness. Although these words cannot fully express our thanks, we trust you'll underatand the gratitude behind them.

"Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminisences" will be placed in our library. Thank you so much.

****

From Mrs. Arthur R. Wallace.

Dear Mr. Gordon,

Thank you so much for the Antelope Valley Remininscences. It will be treasured not only by us, but by future generations.

I'm so glad you remembered us!

****

From Mrs. Maude Settle Mumaw.

Thank you so much for the lovely book. I really did enjoy it. It was so nice of you to send me a copy. I will want some more later for my family. Will get in touch. Thanks again.

****

From Phyllis Munz Damann.

Congratulations on your book. Really appreciate your efforts. That was a wonderful thing to do.

What inspired you to do it? Have ordered two copies - one for my sister Ruth Ety and one for us from Victoria Maris. Asked her to see if she could get them autographed by you as it will be a fine keepsake. Respectfully,

P.S. Got the news about the book from Uncle Arnold Munz. Our mother, Gertrude, our father, Eli.

First Letter Requesting Stories & Letters for the Second Edition

January 2, 1972

To: Those courageous, staunch perservering people that have laid the foundations for a great and prosperous Antelope Valley.

From: J. Shelton Gordon

Subject: The need for a Second Edition of "Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers" compiled by J. Shelton Gordon.

Dear Old Timer Friends: The results of the first edition of the above mentioned manuscript have been most encouraging. The whole-hearted acceptance of my small contribution in preserving the personal history of some of our Antelope Valley Pioneers has been most rewarding.

The first edition was dated October 1, 1971, although it took a couple of years prior thereto to get all of the material together. Now however, with your earnest help I would like to set the date of April 1st, 1973, as the dead line for the Second Edition. It now seems necessary to get out this Second Edition. Letters, stories and articles of great historical merit have kept coming in long after the printing and distribution of the first edition of October 1st, 1971. So we discover that there is still a great deal of historical information that should be published, all happening prior to 1950.

Thus we start the Second Edition. So my dear friends become part of this very worthwhile effort to preserve the local history of our great South Antelope Valley. Let us do it now before we take off for cloud nine and lose these personal and most interesting facts and bits of information that are now locked up in our minds. If you know of someone that has not gotten a letter or read the article in the paper, get them to write their story. Tell your story in your own words. Write it yourself. Writing the story yourself makes the historical tale much more interesting than some one reporting it for you. If you can, type it on 8 1/2" x 14" paper. It will help greatly. If you cannot, write it up by hand on any paper and then we will have it typed. But write it and send your story in to me now. Good photographs will be most valuable of yourselves as well as the place or the happenings that you write about in your article, with an explanation of the situation to which they refer.

This is your chance to have your experiences recorded in the pages of history. Please do not delay. To those that send in their articles, a copy of the Second Edition will be sent as a memento of their personal contribution. May I have the pleasure of hearing from you soon?? Thank you. My very best wishes to my old timer friends.

Sincerely,

J. Shelton Gordon

A DELIGHTFUL STORY OF PALMDALE

Written by

Eileen & Jerry Chase

Dear Mr. Gordon:

We do not consider ourselves really old-timers or pioneers, and yet we have been here quite a few years, and seen many changes. Here are a few memories of our Valley History.

On a beautiful day in May, 1941, we moved to Palmdale from Los Angeles, with our two months old baby boy, Jim. The move was to be for 6 months only and it is now 32 years. We had found a house on Q-11 Street and were very lucky to have it to move in to. There was nothing across the street from our house but vacant property and old pear trees. The town was very small, around 500 residents. It was very dark at night, as there were no street lights except on the Highway. Houses were heated with oil burning stoves or fire places. The weather was just about the same as it is now, and hard to get used to. Hot in the summer, cold in the winter, and then the wind. Recreation was all in the homes, churches and school. We drove up over the old Mint Canyon Road, or Sierra Highway, as it is called now. It was only two lanes or 32 feet wide. The roads in those days followed the old wagon train path to get to Los Angeles. It has been widened and improved many times since then. The Angeles Crest Highway was opened also in 1941, and was a boon to the Valley as it linked us with Pasadena, Los Angeles and other towns, and was a much shorter route. Saved time. From city living to rural was something we neither one had given much thought to, but it brought many changes in our lives, all for the better, I am sure.

Jerry had been driving up here every other day for Langendorf Bakeries as a salesman. When they decided to put a man up here permanently, he, being the youngest, was chosen. He was acquainted with merchants all the way up to Mojave, was busy all day and liked it. I did not. I was lonesome and felt like an outsider. So many residents were related to each other by birth or marriage. It was not long, though, until we met Sue and Bernie Starksen, and Louise and Bob Hughes, they also having a small son. We became very close friends and spent many happy days together through the years. I soon found out there were many things to do and places of interest to visit. As the years passed, we knew what a wonderful place this was to raise a family. During this time, I also became active in the Junior Woman's Club and gradually began to get acquainted with the other young people and the town. Jerry also was attending civic meetings, etc.

There was one school, known as Palmdale Elementary School (later renamed Roy R. Maryott). They had First through Eighth grades. After graduating from here, the young students were bussed to Antelope Valley High School in Lancaster. There were two Groceries. One Safeway and the other an independently owned one by Art and Mary Jacobson. This was in the same block as the drug store on the corner of Sierra Highway and Q-9, owned and operated by Robert Wilkins, also the Post Office, a Pool Hall, a small Cafe and a Service Station. There was the Telephone Company with their old fashioned hand crank phones. The operator would connect you to the party you were calling. We each one had a certain number of rings. Party lines. The operators were always so helpful. I remember one night our oil stove blew up, when I got the operator, she asked me what was wrong and when I told her, she just said, "You get the children out of the house and I will ring Jerry and the Fire Department." And she did. There was a blacksmith shop, and the Valley Press. At the Post Office you either had a Post Office box or your mail came General Delivery. The Post Office has moved twice since then. Doctor Snook was the only doctor here. He had his own hospital on Q-9 between 8th and 9th Street. The Presbyterian Church was on the corner of Palmdale Blvd. and 9th Street. It was a beautiful, old fashioned

Church and I loved going there. After the property was sold we had our Church services out in the Lockheed Building on Q Street. We moved to Avenue R and 20th Street in 1956. The Catholic Church was on the corner of Q-10 and 9th Street. The White Spot Cafe was here. The Valley Press was owned and operated by Al Lulay, and our main source of Valley news. Over the years it has changed ownership many times. I recall Lewis Redell sold to Charles Colby, a local pioneer owning a large alfalfa ranch. Mr. Colby sold to James Metcalfe. Mr. Metcalfe sold to the present owners, Miriam and Monty Odett. The paper has steadily grown. In 1941 it came out once a week. Now, in 1973, it is delivered three times a week.

Frank Banta had a garage on the corner of Q-11 and Sierra Highway. This was where Langendorf parked their trucks. Frank was the Fire Chief. The fire department was all volunteer. It was located on Q-11 and 8th Street, just across from Bill and Mina Ritter's. The siren was so loud you could hear it for a good mile or more. It really woke everyone up that lived in town. The telephone operator would turn on the siren when a fire call came. The men would all gather at the Fire Hall and take the truck out to answer the alarm. There was a meeting once a month to keep in practice. Jerry tells many stories of these days, one in particular was: The truck and men answered a call from down on the old "S" curve or death curve as it was called in those days, at Q and Sierra Hwy. There was a motorcycle on fire. The men jumped off the truck, got out the hoses and turned on the water - just a small drizzle trickled out. (This was a mechanical failure. You must remember, our equipment was very obsolete then. Discards from other places.) By this time there were quite a few spectators from town and motorists that had stopped along the highway. One of these men came up to Jerry and said, "What are you guys doing, shooting a Laurel and Hardy comedy?" We have had some very bad fires, when we have had to have help from surrounding communities, such as the time the school auditorium and more burned down, or the McBride's Hardware Store and other small buildings along where the Valley Press is now, burned down, (Q-9 and Sierra Hwy.) These volunteer men worked very hard and were very dedicated through the years. A job well done and a good example of a small town working together.

There was nothing on the west side of Sierra Hwy. in these two blocks except the old depot and the train tracks. I can remember hoboes coming to our door those first couple of years, but during and after World War II this all stopped. During the War we had a USO building and several air watch buildings around town. The townspeople volunteered for both. We had to go to Lancaster for most of our shopping, clothing, shoes, etc., or Sears Catalog, or down below. There was a hitching rack, for ranchers to use when they came to town on horseback. This was in back of the stores. We have been told that Palmdale had all the automobile agencies prior to 1935 and 36. It was the biggest town in the Valley. There was more growth gradually in Lancaster because it was centralized, and at this time the agencies forced the automobile companies to move to Lancaster.

I will always remember how mournful and lonesome the train whistles sounded as they were going through town. There were so few buildings and sound carried so far. Now it is a happy, cheerful sound to me.

There was very little growth until during and after World War II. The original start of the airfield came about by interested residents, who took up a collection and sent a man to Washington, D.C., to lobby for an emergency landing field. This was granted. During the War, the Federal Government leased the airfield from the Palmdale Irrigation District and developed the cement runways. The field was used to train foreign and American pilots to fly American aircraft. At the conclusion of the War, the airfield was declared surplus and was acquired by the County of Los Angeles. During the acquisition

of the airport by the County the town was divided into two factions, those who wanted the airport and those who did not, creating a controversy that eventually broke up many old friendships. The County purchased the property from the Palmdale Irrigation District. They enlarged it to it's present size, building the Administration building and purchasing more land in 1947. In the early 1950's, the Federal Government purchased the airport from Los Angeles County and they still own it. The present Kiwanis building served as barracks and housed service men during this war.

On January 10, 1944, our second son was born, Bill, at the Palmdale Hospital. My parents, the Fred Grays, had moved up here. In November of 1944 we purchased the house we are living in now from Wilkin's. At the same time, Bill and Berta Baker purchased the drug store from them. We became very close friends with the Bakers and Mel and Mary Courson. The drug store was a congregating place to meet and talk to old friends, have an ice cream soda, etc., then go next door to pick up your mail. The town was slowly starting to grow, with all the service men and their wives and families out at the Muroc Air Base. More houses were needed and built. During this time we had another market come into town. The Morse Market, where the first Lilac Show was held, there was a restaurant in the old hotel. Later Milt Wolf and Gordon Taylor put in a radio and variety store. We had a hardware store, barber shop, the Wallaces put in the Toggery, for men's wear, and the town generally was growing.

Up until this time the Bank of America was closed and the business men had to go to Lancaster. Then they sent a man down a day or two in the afternoons from Lancaster to do the banking. Jerry and many of the business men in town, after several meetings with bank officials, persuaded them that we should have a full time bank here. It was not too long until we were having a grand opening of our own Bank of America. For years this was in the small building on Palmdale Blvd. and 8th Street.

We liked Palmdale better every day, were in our new house and completely engrossed in community affairs. We knew it was a wonderful place to raise children and knew we were going to stay for a while. In the Junior Woman's Club we had picketed the Highway at the corner of Palmdale Blvd. and Sierra Hwy. for signals. Judge Keller helped us get them. The towns-people took up a collection to put lights in and make a baseball diamond. $3000 was collected. Jerry managed the Palmdale Chamber of Commerce team. This was located south of the school, and these games were enjoyed by everyone on some beautiful spring and summer evenings.

Our daughter, Mary, was born in July 1946, and Jerry had gone back to school to study Real Estate. He went into a partnership with Mel Courson. They built a small office on Sierra Highway, adjacent to the old Palmdale Depot. The office is still there. Ross Amspoker, the Attorney, also had a small office there when he and Beryle first came to town. Jerry stayed in this office until he moved to Palmdale Blvd. from Sierra Highway, anticipating the growth along Palmdale Blvd. The Palmdale Inn was on the corner of Sierra Hwy. and Palmdale Blvd. His second office was behind this. The Inn was later torn down and there is a service station there now. In a couple of years he purchased property with Andrew Copeland as his partner, on the corner of 8th and Palmdale Blvd., in one of the oldest buildings in town, and has been there since. With the continuous growth of the town, subdivisions were being put in, super markets, clothing stores, and just about everything one wanted now, could be purchased in our town. Sage School was built on 20th and R. Streets. Here all the 7th and 8th graders were sent and given a choice of classes and some extra-curricular activities. During this time we met the Strasburgs and the Cummins. We were drawn together because we all had two older boys and one daughter. Mrs. Strasburg was our first School Nurse, and Haldane Cummins - our first dentist in town. Met and became friendly with many other wonderful people during this growth.

It was a great day when the county broke ground and started to work on the park grounds and the swimming pool. The grounds were put in first, then the little back building and then the pool. The day Melville J. Courson Park was dedicated was a celebrated day in town. There were county officials here, all the civic groups were represented, school band played, boy scout troops and great excitement. The pool that year was open about a week when there was trouble with the filtering system and it was closed for the rest of that summer. Has been opened continuously since. It was wonderful to have a place to take children to swim and where they could have supervised crafts and play ground activities. Some names come to my mind in connection with these first park years, like Rossalee Byers, Alfred Beasley, Beryle Amspoker and Louie Arnold. Many of the interested parents helped out when they had play days or competitions of any kind.

We had two horses in our back yard, rabbits, pigeons, chickens, always a dog and one cat. No one complained, because it was all vacant lots except for our neighbors, the Paul Schoellers. Then houses were gradually built and apartments and the animals had to go. Jerry's brother, Bill, moved up here around this time. Has been here since, married Martha McFerrin, and they have three daughters. Live in Lancaster. My brother, Fred, came back from the war in Germany, married Rosemary Andrews, had two children, 1 boy, 1 girl. Lived here until both passed away.

The Palmdale Woman's Club had built and owned the building where the Library is now on the corner of Q-9 and 9th Street. The smaller portion was rented to the County for a Library. Then the entire building was sold to the County and the Library was enlarged. The Woman's Club built another building on the corner of 10th and Q-12 Streets. They occupied this for a few years and then sold this to the County for a larger recreation building, as it was needed. It is well used now with all age groups from pre-schoolers to senior citizens. The Woman's Club House is now on Q Street.

We now have seven elementary schools and one high school. This was opened in 1956 with just the front section of buildings. No gyms, auditorium, music rooms or athletic fields. The students were full of school spirit and was great to have the high school in town. Our first graduating class was in 1959. Their first semester had been at A.V.J.U.H.S. A P.T.A. was organized and also a Boosters' Club. Parents helped readily when called upon during these first years. Gradually each year class rooms and buildings, ball fields, etc. were added until now it is a very complete high school.

I remember when our Little League Field was opened on 20th and Palmdale Blvd. Many fathers spent hours grading and working to make this possible and no one appreciated it more than these young boys. We spent many years watching ball games, with two boys and then on to Pony League. The parents, brothers, sisters and friends all attended these games. There was a small concession stand, which the mothers took care of. Now there are three fields, and of course many, many more boys to participate.

Our biggest growth was during the Korean war. There were approximately 9000 employees on the airfield. Production was at its highest peak at Lockheed, Northrup, Convair, Douglas, etc. The Government owned all the improvements and leased to the airplane manufacturers. Many of our families had gone into aircraft work as many ranches and poultry farms were slowing down, although we still have many large alfalfa and poultry ranches in the Antelope Valley today. People began to realize that our economy was being changed from a farming to an aircraft oriented community. This was a neccesity because our water table was receding and there was not enough water to irrigate so many large ranches.

After the war there was no need for the large number of workers. It was hard to keep employment stable because what ever was manufactured on the airfields had to be under a Government contract since it was all Government owned. The Federal Government still owns the airfield and all installations on it. It comprises approximately 5000 acres. During this period there were over 3000 vacant houses, and it took roughly 7 years to recover. From this time on our growth has been more stable. The airfield has grown steadily, the F.A.A. facilities employ around 500, compared to 4 in the old Palmdale Tower. Lockheed in recent years has built its own factory on property owned west of the airfield. They employ approximately 7000 workers today. Company owned and privately owned businesses all seem to be doing well.

Looking back, I remember many happy times at the Masonic building on 40th Street. Both boys were members of DeMolay, Bill went on to be Master Councilor and Mary Honored Queen of Jobs Daughters. How many wonderful adults we have known through these organizations. Jerry has been a member of the Masons, Shriners, Elks, Kiwanis (for a short while), President of the Realty Board (one of its organizers), and President of the Boosters' Club and the Fin and Feather Club. Some of the men in town were organizing a fishing club. The then owner of the ranch (which is known as Courson Ranch today) came up with the name "Fin and Feather Club" and it has been called that ever since. We have seen this lake dry three times since we have been here.

I have been in P.T.A. in Maryott, Sage and Palmdale High School, Advisor to Youth Coordinating Council, Sunday School Teacher, and Superintendent, Junior Woman's Club, Woman's Club, Mother's Club in DeMolay and Jobies, Boy Scouts, and Girl Scouts. We have enjoyed all these activities over the years, and our association with the many other wonderful adults in our community interested in youth activities.

As I have been writing these memories, I have become very nostalgic just looking back and thinking of all the happy times we have had and the wonderful friendships we have made over the years. Palmdale has been very good to us and we are very thankful to have been a part of its growing years with our children. They are all grown now. Jim, after two years in the service, married Barbara, they have three children - Timothy 10, Michael 7 and Elizabeth 2. He is Supervisor for the Langendorf - Barbara Ann plant in Lancaster. They live in Palmdale. Bill is not married. He lives here and is in Real Estate. Mary is married to Michael Taylor (2 years in service). They live in Boise, Idaho, have one son Matthew, 3 months old. Jerry and I are happy and contented with our years in Palmdale.

In closing we are hoping that we continue to grow and become the great International Airport community that we were meant to be.

Sincerely

Jerry and Eileen Rose

A WONDERFUL STORY OF REAL PIONEERING

by

Joseph & Ruth Hunt

May 7, 1973

J. Shelton Gordon
650 W. Barrel Springs Road
Palmdale, Calif. 93550

Dear Mr. Gordon,

Regarding your request for some early impressions of Palmdale and our early experiences here, I feel that we hardly rate as "old timers". We bought our land here in 1950. The land as you know is located along 10th St. West and also borders Elizabeth Lake Road. Tenth Street West was only a trail. There was no water or other utilities in this area. Joe and his partners first began drilling for water, which they found and the well just off of Avenue P and 10th West was developed. The water company was the Deep River Water Company which served the area known as Desert View Highlands until 1962 when it was sold to the County Waterworks District.

The partners in the venture, the ones who lived in the area, were Mr. George Campbell and Mr. John Wilcox. They were the salesmen, and the sales office was located at the Wishing Well at the corner of 10th St. and Q. Joe's Construction Office was 1/2 mile north on 10th, and he also had a mill where much of the materials for the homes in Desert View was cut and formed. After we had built about 100 homes, we opened the area to other builders, as my husband and I had really come to Palmdale to retire.

Through our efforts and our partners', we brought the Methodist Church, the Antelope Valley Country Club, a Mobil Gas Station and Juniper School to the area. More recently there has been built a YMCA building.

As you can see from some of the pictures, some of the acreage we planted to wheat, strip farming which we rarely see today. The land we bought had never been farmed. There was not a fence or building on any of the 1800 acres when we first came.

One interesting thing about our mill was that the Methodist Church held services there before the church building was built in 1956-57. The saws and piles of lumber were covered, rugs and chairs and altar put out. Then after service it was reconverted to a carpenter mill.

Those early years were busy ones for Joe and me as we were active in the organization of the South Antelope Valley YMCA, the 1st National Bank, the Methodist Church, the Antelope Valley Kiwanis Club, Chapter PV of PEO, the Community Chest, all new organizations in the Valley, as well as participating in the on going activities of the Chamber of Commerce and Womans Club and AAUW.

Joe was president of the YMCA and later the AV Kiwanis Club and on the board of most of the other organizations before mentioned as well as on committees of the State Chamber of Commerce. He is currently in his 13th year on the Antelope Valley East Kern Water Agency.

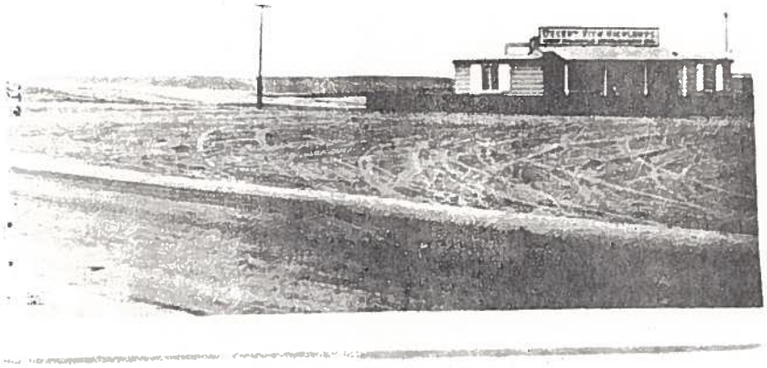
Our boys too, were active. Bob, who was Joe's building partner in those early years, was the first president of the Junior Chamber of Commerce, active in Toastmasters Club, working in building groups, etc.

When Jim came home from the Navy he ran the water company. At college he was active in Circle K and other groups also new to the Valley. He has continued his activity through years on the Chamber of Commerce Board, Palmdale and State Board of Realtors, Kiwanis, Antelope Valley Joint Road Committee, YMCA and Y's Mens. He has been president of Palmdale Realtors, president of A.V. Kiwanis, Chairman of the Road Committee, treasurer and other offices in other groups. He presently has his business, the Wm. James Hunt, Realty Co., on the Wishing Well corner of Desert View Highlands.

Our family, not quite a quarter of a century in Antelope Valley, were interested and active in many areas in our early years here and continue to show our interest when able.

Sincerely,

Ruth H. Hunt



"The Clyde Wallace Family Story"
(Clyde, Lorna, Clydell, Susan and Bill)

April 1, 1973

Dear Shelton:

I don't remember the exact date of the first time that I came to Antelope Valley, but it was about 1925. We lived in Burbank and this was where we came hunting, fishing and stopped over on our way to the snow at Big Pine. However, I do remember the first time that I thought about making Palmdale our home.

It was many years later, after Lorna and I were married. In the Spring of 1941, Lorna's father, K. K. Simpson, a Burbank realtor, asked my Dad, C. G. Wallace and me to go to an auction sale. An acquaintance of his was selling his ranch, located on Sierra Highway between Lancaster and Palmdale. It was at this sale that we met for the first time R. D. Logue and his son, Bob, both of whom were to become our friends. It was on this trip that we were shown the Tumbleweed Ranch in Ana Verde Valley, consisting of 640 acres, which was for sale. That did it! We couldn't get it off our minds and before the year was out we had decided to buy it and did.

The old ranch house had not been lived in for some time, so it took us about a year to make it livable. During this time, my folks, C.G. and Maude Wallace, stayed at the ranch most of the time. They attended the Community Presbyterian Church and made many friends in the area.

We had a new baby girl, Susan, born in September of 1942, and Lorna wasn't at all anxious to move into a home without electricity, but we finally moved in on January 29th, 1943, the middle of a very cold winter. Our oldest girl, Clydell, was eleven and our son Bill was nine years old.

As this was during World War II and there was rationing on almost everything, including electrical wire, we used butane for cooking, oil for heating, and kerosene lamps for lighting. Lorna would return to our home in Burbank (which we didn't sell until 1944 - just in case!) once a week to do the washing and ironing. Then, after about a year we were raising enough cattle, hogs and farm products to qualify for electricity to be put in, but we still had to pay for the wire and poles.

Our water supply was from a windmill that pumped into a large tank on a tower which held about two thousand gallons. Knowing that the Antelope Valley has a reputation for being fairly windy, one would assume that this would be water storage enough - but, just take it from the Wallace Family that there are days and days that the wind does not blow, not even a little bit! My cousin, Wade Wallace, and his wife Betty, and daughters, Cindy and Judy, stayed at the ranch with our children during the Fall of 1946 (while we took a trip) and the wind did not blow for 36 days, and they had to haul water from the ice house in town for all their needs -- What a time!

I have talked Lorna into finishing this story.

And I can tell you something else, there have been many times when it really snowed. I recall one Winter especially when we had eighteen inches of snow on the ground. And, guess what - the electricity was off at our ranch for three days and by then our home was all electric, having been remodeled a second time. We could only get to and from the ranch by horseback, so we stayed in town with Betty and Wade Wallace. Clyde rode his horse to the ranch each day to do all the chores.

A similar thing happened another time, only this time it was a flood and no electricity again, and we stayed in town with our friends, Pauline and Bob Logue. This was during the time that Pauline was helping me at The Toggery.

But, back to the earlier years. To supplement our farm income, Clyde did custom baling with the first New Holland Automatic string tie baler in Palmdale. Our son Bill, though very young, worked with his Dad on this venture. Also, Clyde had gotten his Real Estate Brokers license and was selling real estate. Plus, we had the Union Oil Service Station on the N.W. corner of Sierra Highway and Palmdale Blvd. Later we were to have other Union Stations, one on the S.E. corner of Palmdale Blvd. and Ninth Street East, which was operated by our son Bill. Another one on Division Street and Avenue J in Lancaster, which was operated by our son-in-law, Guy Coats.

After our aforesaid trip in the Fall of 1946, traveling over much of the United States looking for a good place to go into business, we returned to the Valley, more convinced than ever that it was The Place with the brightest future.

We considered many businesses but as there was no place in Palmdale to buy any men's clothing, we decided on a men's clothing store. So, on March 15th, 1947, with little more than a brave front, we opened the first men's clothing store on Sierra Highway in a little part of Rosie's White Spot Building and called it The Toggery.

Amazingly, the business grew and in June of the same year we moved into larger quarters in the Moore Building on Sierra Highway, north of the old Palmdale Inn, which had long been a landmark on the N.E. corner of Sierra Highway and Palmdale Blvd. The Inn is now gone and there is a big, modern service station on that corner now.

At the time of this move, Marge Iwanowsky opened a Ladies' Shop in the same building with us. (Marge and Ivan Iwanowsky had moved to Palmdale a year or so before. Ivan was here with the first rocket ship to be built in this area, the X-1.) Then, in April of 1948, Marge and Ivan were transferred back to New Jersey and we purchased the Ladies' Shop from her and from then on we operated both shops.

The business continued to grow and soon became too big for that little store. About this time, Hazelton's, who had opened a general merchandise type store about 1949, just north of us, closed their store and moved back to Ridgecrest. So, their building was ideal for us as it was much more spacious, so, we moved in, June 1st, 1952. Mr. Moore was still our landlord as he owned both buildings.

On August 1st and 2nd of 1952 we had our Grand Opening and it was really quite an affair for those days. By this time we had two full time employees, plus our daughter Clydell, when she was available. Rosemond Wright and Pauline Logue were loyal friends and employees for many of those "Toggery Years". During the rush of the Christmas season all the family helped. Bill before he joined the Navy, Clydell and later after she was married, her husband Guy, little Susie gave out the Green Stamps and then later when she was older, did gift wrapping, aided by Cindy and Judy. Betty and Wade were always good helpers as was my brother, Aldon Simpson on vacation from his school where he taught in Laguna Beach. We all had a lot of fun working together. We sold The Toggery August 15, 1955.

My time spent at The Toggery was made possible by our very dear friend, Plessie Roderick, who took charge of our home and kept things running smoothly for many years until we moved. We still count her as "one of the family".

Clydell, Bill and Susan all attended Palmdale Elementary School. Clydell and Bill graduated from Lancaster High School. However, by the time Susie came along Palmdale had it's own High School and she went there, starting the opening year.

In 1953 Clydell married Guy Coats from Downey. They met while attending Orange Coast College in Costa Mesa. They were both graduated from there.

In 1956 Bill returned home from a two year tour in Japan, thus completing four years in the Navy. The next year he married Patricia Seminario, daughter of Andy and Myrtle Seminario, long time residents of the Valley.

Susan graduated from Harbor High School in Newport Beach where she spent her Senior year, while staying with Clydell and Guy who were then living in Balboa. After graduation she took a course at the Lancaster Beauty School and then in 1961 she married Keith Hervey, son of Juanita and Carl Hervey of Leona Valley.

During all these busy years Clyde was very active in many Civic activities. He was a Charter member of the Antelope Valley Sheriffs Posse and was the first Captain of the unit. He was always very active in the Palmdale Chamber of Commerce and served as its President in 1953 and again in 1955. He was appointed to the Antelope Valley Fair Board of Directors and was President of the Board in 1956 and 1957. He served on this Board from 1952 until 1962 when we moved. He was a Director of the First National Bank of Palmdale when it was chartered in 1955. C.A. "Bud" Monroe was the President. The bank was sold in 1959 to United California Bank. He was a member of Palmdale Kiwanis Club and later a charter member of the Antelope Valley Kiwanis Club. He is a life-time honorary member of the Antelope Valley Joint Road Committee. He is still a member of the Palmdale Masonic Lodge and Al Malaikah Shrine.

Over the years I was active in the P.T.A., the Palmdale Women's Club, the Presbyterian Church Guild and the Antelope Valley Assistance League.

After we sold The Toggery in 1955, Clyde devoted most of his time to the Pheasant Hunting Club at the ranch. though he was also quite active in real estate plus all the aforementioned Civic activities. Then in January of 1959 we opened our new business venture, "Clyde Wallace & Sons: on West Avenue I in Lancaster. We were the exclusive Dealer-Distributor of Antelope Valley for U.S. Royal Tires. We also had the most modern electrical recapping equipment in the Valley at that time.

This was a family affair. Clyde, general manager; Lorna, budget and bookkeeping department; Bill, in charge of the recapping shop and all commercial sales; our son-in-law Guy was in charge of the service department and new tire sales and Loyd Coats, Guy's brother, had the brake, alignment and air-conditioning department.

We all worked very hard and the business was doing very well until the change-over from winged aircraft to jet aircraft and all the Companies at Plant 42 laid off many employees and there was quite a Recession in the Valley. So, after eighteen months we decided to close down the business before it became a complete disaster.

So, once more back to the ranch where we expanded the hunting club, changing the name to "The Wild Goose Shooting Club", a membership club. In addition to the pheasant and quail, Clyde added flighted mallard ducks, which in itself was a most interesting adventure. We had members from all over Southern California, mostly from Hollywood and Beverly Hills. It was interesting and a fun thing and did very well, but it proved to be mostly a week-end occupation and so Clyde, who has to be active all the time, soon grew restless.

By this time Guy was in the real estate business in Costa Mesa and it was very good. So, we moved to Costa Mesa in the Spring of 1962. Later that year we sold the ranch. Then early in 1963 Clyde and Guy opened their own real estate office, "Coats and Wallace" on Harbor Blvd. in Costa Mesa. Soon Bill moved to Costa Mesa and became a partner in the business, but he really didn't like the real estate business and he and Pat missed the Valley, so after a couple of years they moved back to Lancaster. The business grew and did very well. Then just last year Clyde sold his interest in the business to Guy and in July of 1972 we moved back home, and are we happy to be back!

Pat and Bill and their two boys Bart and Billy have a new home in nearby Quartz Hill. Clydell and Guy and their three children, Guy William, Suellen and David live in Orange. Susie and Keith live in Santa Ana with their two children, Tara and Clint. We now have seven lovely grandchildren and they aren't too far away.

Things are so changed here in the Valley. The old Ranch House burned down in 1967 and nothing at the old ranch remains except so many memories of a happy twenty years, where we lived and raised our children in a little rural town which seems destined to become a Big City.

Other treasured memories that come to mind of those early days spent here -- 1942 to 1962:

We always enjoyed going to Mel and Mary Courson's restaurant, both for the excellent food and the friendly host and hostess. And Mel singing to our little two year old Susie, as he put her in the high chair, "If you knew Susie, Like I know Susie." Mel was the best booster for Palmdale and the Valley that the Valley ever had. He WAS the Chamber of Commerce. Mary opened their lovely home on many, many occasions to entertain officials from the Aircraft Industry, the Federal, State and County Governments, Edwards Air Force Base Personnel, all for the interests of Palmdale and usually half the town was there. She was truly a gracious hostess.

In those days, the popular meeting place each day was at Berta and Bill Baker's Drug Store, just next door to the old post office. Here all the news and gossip of the day was exchanged amid warm and friendly surroundings. They were a wonderful couple and a great asset to a growing community. And still are.

Cosette and Chuck Colby opened their lovely Spanish Adobe home to entertain many dignitaries, especially the ones that were interested in the progress of Palmdale. The South Antelope Valley Press was never more dedicated to Palmdale's welfare than during their ownership. And, Cosette really had a way, all her own, of writing a column that was thought provoking.

We spent some lovely hours at the week-end home of Viola and Shelton Gordon long before they moved here from Pasadena. Their home was charming and Viola always had a freezer full of all those "goodies" she makes so well and was so generous serving them to their neighbors and guests. It was a lucky day for the Valley when they finally moved their family here to stay. They have both given much of themselves for the good of the Valley.

Even the P.T.A. brings back fond memories of many quaint money-raising events such as bake sales and pie suppers. And the Kiwanis play, "Breezy Money", with an all male cast, which was shown a second time by popular demand. Also, not to be forgotten were the bazaars and bake sales of the Women's Guild of the Presbyterian Church. A lot of work but fun and rewarding.

Closely working together on all the "Big Community Enterprises" were the Reverend Clifton and Mildred Dorn, our beloved Minister and his wonderful wife; Helyn and Mickey Cochran, Pauline and Lester Bright, Francis and Bill Schafer, who though they lived in Lancaster, had a business in Palmdale and were faithful

workers to support local endeavors; Peggy and Chan Chandler, Pauline and Bob Logue and SO many more, but these came to mind so easily as we all came to Palmdale around the same time and were "Newcomers" together.

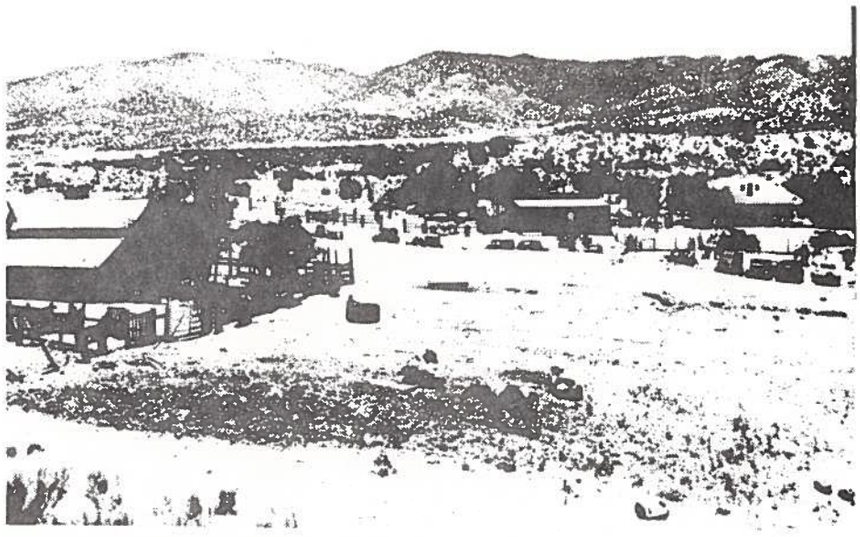
Again, remembering---All the fun square dances at Gigliotti Hall; the Victory Bond auctions at the old Lumber Yard chairmanned by Mina Ritter; the livestock autions every Saturday at the Wallace Ranch --Yes, Clyde was the auctioneer at both auctions; the very first 4th of July Rodeo and Gymkhana put on by the Antelope Valley Sheriffs Posse, many of the first ones being held at the Wallace Ranch. These were to become an annual event. All our children were good riders and we all enjoyed any horse show whether it was at the A.V. Fair, Bonelli Stadium at Saugus, the Colosseum in L.A., the Palmdale Grammer School or Wallace Ranch.

And then Palmdale began to change -- Don Hertel bought the drug store -- Monte Odett bought the Valley Press -- Domenic Massari sold to a shopping center -- The Toggery was no more -- and now look! But that's Progress!!

Clyde and Lorna Wallace

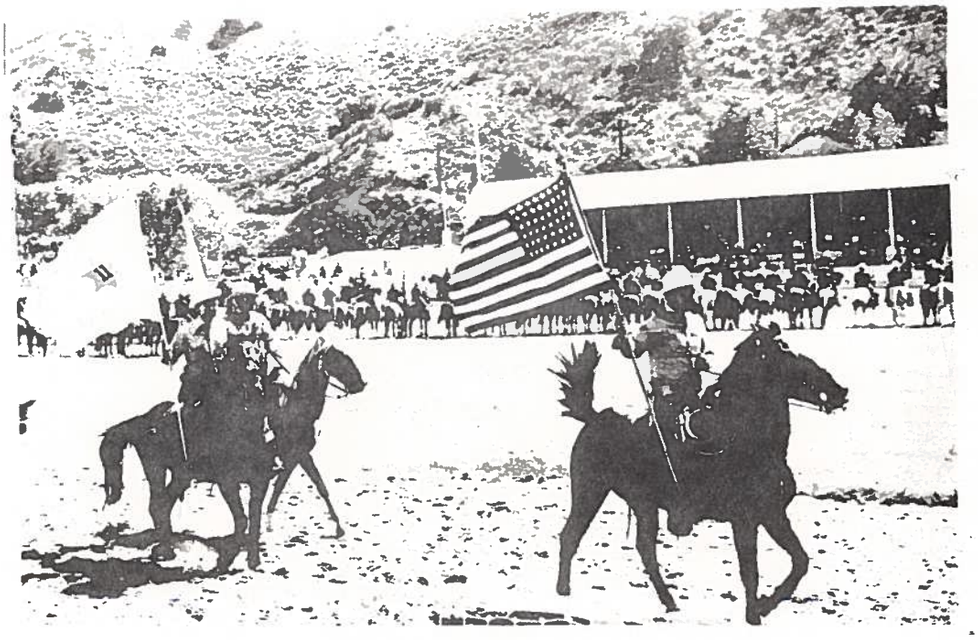
May 1, 1971

The Wallace Ranch



Mr. and Mrs.
Clyde Wallace
Aug., 1952

Clyde Wade &
Jack Bones at
Bonellie's in
Saugus, 5/1949



HISTORY OF WESTSIDE UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT

By O. Milton Stark

7/26/72

The Westside Union School District covers 315 square miles of the western part of the Antelope Valley. It has only been in existence a short 26 years, but we have a heritage which goes back many years -- a heritage of the people and the land.

A hundred years ago, before the arrival of the early pioneers, wild life abounded over the entire area. After the winter rains, fillaree and winter grasses provided lush pasture for over 30,000 antelope and hoards of jack rabbits. In the spring, poppies blanketed the countryside like a great prairie fire. This was the era before tumble weeds, which are not indigenous to this land, but came with imported grain seed. Indian encampments were spread along the edge of the valley where food and water was plentiful.

The first settlers were cattlemen who came in the 1870's to carve out their homesteads where surface water appeared. In 1876 the Southern Pacific built their Los Angeles to Bakersfield railroad across the valley, forming a giant cattle guard, preventing the antelope from moving farther out into the desert to forage for food when the heavy snows came. Over half the herd was lost in the fierce winters of the 1880's from starvation, falling prey to the coyote and cougars, and being shot by passengers from the platforms of the trains. These animals, as well as the Indians, were destined to disappear from sight altogether by the time of World War I.

The German immigrant families of Godde, Munz, Ritter, and Ullman came to this area in the 1880's and 90's, settling in Belleview, Leones Valley, and Fairmont. The first school to be built in our District was Del Sur in 1887, followed by Fairmont in 1889, and Belleview in 1894. The Leona School District was formed in 1895 in Leones Valley, the Manzana Colony was established at what is now 220th Street West and Avenue D in 1892 and 1893. Twenty-two hundred acres of almonds, fruit and grapes were planted, only to be wiped out by the severe droughts of 1895, 96, and 97. Only a few stunted almond trees are left to mark the site.

1895 to 1905 were hard years for the Westside with severe droughts and no ability to tap our vast underground water resources. But in 1904 came the gasoline engines to pump water. This was the beginning of the alfalfa farming industry. People again began moving into our area -- "Lane" from New Jersey, "Berry" from Nebraska, and the "Barnes" from Iowa. Neenach School opened in 1906. The Japanese families of "Nakamura", "Ickimoto", "Okamoto", and "Nishimoto" settled near 60th West and Avenue D between 1909 and 1912 and started the Rogers School. Esperanza School began in 1914 and Pine Canyon School District was formed at Three Points in 1916. I have here a 1927 dedication program of the Esperanza School which indicates "December 28, 1914 -- $4,000 bond election held, eight votes were cast -- all favorable". Since that was before women could vote, that was probably 100% of the vote!

All of these one and two teacher rural schools covered grades one through eight. To go to the Antelope Valley High School (founded in 1912), one had to either take up residence in private homes or the high school dormitories or ride long distances on horse back. In 1919 the high school began their first bus run. Kenny Saddler, a student at the school, drove a Ford bus from Leones Valley through Palmdale to the high school -- a run of about 22 miles.

In 1919 and the early 20's the Greek families of "Eliopolus", "Nastas", "Hronis:, and "Kappas" settled in the Esperanza-Del Sur area to develope their flourishing alfalfa ranches.

In 1923 the high school added the Del Sur bus run and by 1924 the area covered by busses was extended way out to Fairmont.

In the late 20's, the Spanish families of "Gorrindo", "Seminaro", "Semerinco", and "Llarena" began farming in the Del Sur community.

As a student at Esperanza School in the late 1920's, I remember the area as a kind of rural melting pot where first and second generation Americans of German, Japanese, Greek, Swiss, Spanish, and Basque ancestry went to school with immigrants from Nebraska, Kansas, New Jersey, Iowa, and Texas.

The women teachers of these rural schools were a strong, self-reliant group who taught values of good and bad - right and wrong, as an absolute -- their names were "Baker", "Mc Pherson", "Bosworth", "Houston", "Galbraith" and "Dorsett". Each school was supervised by a three-man Board of Trustees, and the total area was covered by a Regional Supervisor from the Los Angeles County Schools by the name of W.J. Cagney.

At the end of World War II there was a move to consolidate the small school districts into more efficient operating organizations so that on December 31, 1945, the Westside School District was formed from the combination of the districts of Del Sur, Esperanza, Fairmont, and Rogers. A year later, Belleview was added. The Neenach District joined in 1947 followed by the Leona School District in 1948 and finally in 1954 Pine Canyon School District entered the union to give us our present boundaries.

Gradually, these small school houses were abandoned as we built our present schools. Belleview School which was located at 50th and M-4 was added onto in 1950, and the name was changed to Quartz Hill Elementary School. Additions have been made in 1951, 1954, and 1956. Ten classrooms and an administration building were constructed at the present Del Sur school in 1949. Additions were made in 1952, 1954, and 1956. Valley View was originally constructed in 1958 with additions in 1964 and 1966.

In 1965 an era ended with the opening of the present Leona School which replaced the last one-teacher school in Los Angeles County.

We are now dedicating the beautiful Joe Walker Junior High School hoping that we are providing educational programs and facilities to help our children keep pace with modern day life. As I look over the names of students in our Westside District, I still run across the names of the old families -- "Godde" - "Munz" - "Ritter" - "Eliopolus" - "Nishimoto" - "Llorene" - "Gorrindo" -- but now greatly outnumbered by immigrants from Pacoima, Hawthorne, Inglewood, and Canoga Park with names like Frazier, Barker, Patterson, Livingston, Dixon, and Christensen.

Now what does the future hold for us? Well, in June we will be called upon to decide whether we wish to combine with the Hughes-Elizabeth Lake, Gorman, and our portion of the Antelope Valley High School District to become a unified district. We are certain that you will weigh the advantages and disadvantages of unification very carefully before casting your ballot.

We are further certain that uppermost in the minds of the voter will be the desire to provide our children with quality education -- for this has been the philosophy which pervades the development of our schools throughout the history of our district.

AN EXCELLENT STORY BY MARY INCE McPHERSON

Mrs. Mary I. McPherson was a regular teacher in the Antelope Valley Schools from 1920 to 1956 and then continued as a substitute for 11 more years, setting a record for having taught school in Antelope Valley for longer than any other person. The following is a poem appearing in her book of poetry entitled "Gleanings from the Desert" -- Published 1971:

The Homestead

The homestead was a busy place
Not always to our liking,
Hearing the coyote's mournful howl
Watch for the rattlesnake striking.

I lived at the foot of Piute Butte
While in Wilsona teaching,
Library work was added to this,
The reading scope far reaching.

The pupils here were very few
They finally dropped to one,
We must bring in someone new
This was quickly done.

To the County Juvenile Hall
The District School Board went,
The County answered to their call,
And several juveniles sent.

The school then continued to grow
The A. D. A. was made.
So in the little red school house,
Many new plans were laid.

'Twas here we studied desert life
The chipmunk and the bunny,
The cunning fox, the bobcat, too,
Sidewinder tracks so funny.

Thus we spent an interesting time
At this homestead dwelling,
Many stories left untold,
That really are worth telling.

Story by Mary Ince McPherson -

Teaching school is very rewarding under the right conditions, but to have 85 children in one classroom and try to teach all eight grades is too much for anyone. I resigned from such a school in Oklahoma and came to California with my sister and her family.

We first went to Eureka in Northern California, thinking we would make it our home, but found it rained too much to please us. We turned south to Los Angeles to see if we would like it. We lived in the Palms, Culver City area the first few months, then moved into Los Angeles.

We had two cousins, John and Stanford McCaleb, who worked on the Los Angeles Police Force, so we invited them to come to see us. When John would have a day off duty, he would take us sightseeing in and around Los Angeles. We thought the orange groves so beautiful and the price of the oranges so cheap. You could buy a large basket for twenty-five cents.

In May, 1920, John invited us to visit his parents out on the desert, in the Wilsona area. We came out the San Fernando Road, through the valley. Nearing the mountains we saw water flowing down the mountainside and was told it was the acqueduct which brought water from Owens Valley to be used in Los Angeles City. We continued on our way through a tunnel to Newhall and Saugus. After leaving Saugus we made very slow time. Road work was in progress. The road was being paved to Palmdale and was finished in 1921. After many detours and waits along the way we finally reached Harold where we stopped to get a cool drink. From there we went on to Palmdale. Taking a road in a northeastly direction from Palmdale through the desert to the home of my uncle and aunt, Mr. and Mrs. Ira McCaleb. After seven long hours of travel we were very happy to have reached our destination.

While at my uncle's home, some of the Wilsona School Board members asked me to teach the school for the year 1920-1921. I told them I did not have credentials to teach in California. They urged me to see the County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Mark Keppel, and get credentials to teach. I thought, well why not, it won't be like the school in Oklahoma. I returned to Los Angeles and took a six weeks summer course and received my credentials.

In July 1920 I came to Antelope Valley to live. I lived on a homestead while teaching the Wilsona school. School opened in September with seven children attending. Such a contrast from the 85 I left in Oklahoma. The school was located about a mile and a half from the present location. I was the third teacher to teach in this school.

The children had a chance to study some of the wonders of nature first hand. At noon time they would stand at the windows and watch the chipmunks eat the discarded apple cores. One chipmunk would stand watch while another would eat, then each would give a little bark and they would change places. The rattlesnakes were plentiful. We were fortunate not to have had anyone bitten.

Late that fall we had our first visitors, Mr. and Mrs. W. J. Cagney. Mr. Cagney had been appointed School Supervisor of the Antelope Valley schools. He was not used to driving dirt roads in the desert, so got stuck in the sand. He had been warned that this might happen and was prepared. With a shovel and some hard digging, he was on his way.

Since most of the children lived on the west side of the district and the school was on the east side, the Board thought it would be best to move the school building near the center of the district. They asked me if I would give them the land on which to move it. I gave them three acres not knowing what the result would be. The first location had been given by a bachelor, Mr Crow. When the time came to move the building, the men arrived with their teams and wagons. Mr. Crow came out with his shotgun and told them the building was not to be moved. It should remain where it stood. The men tried to talk to him, but he would not listen. They could not understand his objections since he was a bachelor. The men did not want any violence, so went home. They waited and watched for him to be away, then they would try again. The following week he had to go to Los Angeles. This was their chance. They quickly went to work and had the building in its new location when Mr. Crow returned. Was he ever angry when he saw what had taken place in his absence, but there was nothing he could do.

The new location had more rattlesnakes than the old one. We would kill as many as five in one day. The sidewinder was the hardest to see since they are the color of the ground and do not always coil to strike. We would see coyotes moving through the sagebrush, as well as foxes and bobcats. The coyotes and foxes would come between the house and barn to catch the chickens, with us trying to keep them away.

Mr. and Mrs. Stuart owned Love Joy Springs. He had a dam built so as to form a lake. During the summer we would go there for a picnic, since it was cool near the water.

The post office was in a little store owned by Mr. A. C. Huff. Mr. McGowan had an alfalfa ranch, did well drilling and carried the mail from Wilsona to Lancaster and back three times a week. Other families who lived in the district were: Folgate, McCaleb, Graham, Ernst, Ince, Corse, Kunde, Morrow, and Stickel. Perhaps there were others whom I do not recall.

We would hike over the buttes on week ends when we had company from Los Angeles. They would come in the spring to see the wild flowers. Piute Butte had lupines waist high after we had heavy rain and snow during the winter. Buttercups, coreopsis, asters, sand verbena, wax flower and daisies were some of the other flowers that covered the desert in spring.

In 1925 I again thought I would quit teaching and married Taylor McPherson. We lived in Los Angeles the first year we were married, then returned to the desert for him to work at the Lancaster Inn garage as a mechanic.

As I said before, I thought I would not teach after I married, but I was asked to teach in the Esperanza School since the attendance there was too much for one teacher. I continued in the Westside Union until my retirement.

We now live in Lancaster at our present address.

Mary Ince McPherson

Mary Ince McPherson, 1919(?)

A VERY INTERESTING ARTICLE

by Ruth E. Kinsman

February 6, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I am enclosing a short script about my grandfather Martin. It is one of my cherished memories. You have probably noticed from my previous script that I have already sent you about the Martin family that I was very fond of my mother's people and admire them greatly for their tenacity in carving a profitable ranch from the desert.

The enclosed photograph of the Almondale band surely belongs in a pioneer museum. It was taken between 1894 and 1897, the period in which my father's family lived in Almondale. My father, his sister and brother are in the picture. As you probably know by now, Almondale was settled by mid-Westerners who bought the land from eastern real estate promoters who promised them riches. All went well until the drought struck and they were forced to leave their homes. My father's family moved to Compton. A year later my father, Leroy Elliott, and my mother, Ada Martin, were married.

Early last summer our older son and his wife took my husband and me to the desert for the day. We spent the morning at the Tropico Mine, then came back to Palmdale to enjoy a delicious luncheon in your tea room. I had hoped to meet you and your wife, but we were told you were out of town that weekend.

You surely are a public spirited person to get this pioneer anthology in print for posterity to read. It has inspired me to write what I know of the history of our family. Hopefully, our children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren will enjoy reading it.

We wish you much health, happiness and success in the future.

Sincerely,

Ruth E. Kinsman

Ruth E. Kinsman
2803 Moss Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90065

MY GRANDFATHER MARTIN'S BLACKSMITH SHOP

By Ruth Elliott Kinsman

"Under the spreading chestnut tree the village smithy stands
A mighty man is he, with large and sinewy hands
The muscles of his brawny arms are strong as iron bands"

H. W. Longfellow

My grandfather, Amasa Martin, and his blacksmith shop were quite different from Mr. Longfellow's. The shop was a small frame building that stood by the road on my grandfather's young pear ranch in the tiny settlement of Littlerock. The only tree nearby was a spindly joshua tree that stood by the dusty road. Its sharp spines were a far cry from the fluttering leaves of the chestnut tree in the poem.

In 1904 my father, mother and I lived in the Barton place, now called Twin Cedars, across the road from my grandfather's, and I tried to spend every waking hour with him. I was four and he was sixty-five.

Grandpa was not a big man, but what he lacked in brawn and sinew, he made up with courage and ability. He was below average height and slight of build, but exuding energy from the top of his shining bald pate, fringed with silky gray hair, to the toes of his high laced boots. His arms were lean and his hands were small. The middle finger on his left hand was gone, victim of a horseshoeing episode with a fractious horse. His eyes were a soft blue, but the part of his face not hidden by a short gray beard showed the effects of its exposure to the desert wind and sun.

When the big door of the small frame shop was rolled back on its track, half of the inside of the shop was exposed. In the left hand corner at the back was a forge; nearby stood the anvil with the usual tub of water within reach. At the other end stood the emery wheel, the grindstone, kegs of horseshoes and nails, and farm implements to be repaired. The walls were covered with small tools hung on nails, and across the end a row of different sized horseshoes. Horses' feet differ in size and shape as much as humans. It is the blacksmith's job to select the shoe nearest the right size and then make it fit.

When a horse was brought in for shoeing, its head was tied close up in the left front corner of the shop. Then grandpa would start petting and talking gently to the animal to soothe its fears of a strange place and person. The ranch horses seldom gave trouble, but the cow ponies objected to being in such close quarters after the freedom of the range and corral. They would paw the ground, sometimes kicking, and snort and whinney. Finally grandpa would work his hands down to the horse's leg, pick up a foot and examine it. Then he would straddle the horse's leg, bending slightly, and clasp the hock just above his knees, resting the hoof against his old brown leather apron.

Sometimes he had to change the curve or shape the shoe, even shorten it to fit. The shortening was done with a swift blow of the hammer on the chisel when the shoe was hot. The little ends dropped to the coal dust colored dirt floor and lay unnoticed, soon turning black also. Often my bare feet bore the yellow seared spots made by stepping on them while still hot. This did not dull my enthusiasm for the blacksmith shop, and my feelings were hurt when, for my own safety, it was necessary to send me to the house. Otherwise, my grandfather's patience was unlimited, as I know a small girl must have gotten in his way many times and asked innumerable questions.

Next it was time to fit the shoe. This was done by placing it near the hoof for size. Sometimes it would touch and the acrid smoke would fly as the hoof sizzled. If it didn't have to be reheated and worked more, it was doused in the tub of water to cool it. It sizzled and the steam poured forth in a cloud. Then the shoe had to be nailed in place. I could never understand how they could do it and not hurt the hoof. Sometimes this did happen and the horse's protest would send the smith flying. Grandpa had a way with horses and they usually stood quietly. After the shoe was nailed in place, the nails were bent over after being shortened to leave just enough to hold. Now the job was done.

The smell of the coal smoke, the smell of the sweaty horses, the smell of the singed horses' hooves are not pleasant odors, but they all have a distinct place in my memory, and, though seldom encountered now, help to conjure up my grandfather's blacksmith shop.

"A Short Story", Just a few thoughts by Mrs. Marie Dill

In 1930, I came to Palmdale to visit a friend, a Mrs. Smith, who lived at Four Points. She had moved here for her asthma, had been all over the United States, and this seemed to be the only place she could live with comfort. Mrs. Smith told me about some land two miles east of Palmdale that the bank had for sale; 46 acres. We drove over to look at it, and it looked so barren. Six months before, it had a house on it; now there was a large gaping hole where the house had stood. All that was standing was a small milk house. There were several trees - mostly black locust - and they were all crying for water.

My brother came up here several times and seemed to feel better up here, than in Los Angeles and Glendale where we had been living.

So we bought our Ranch in September, 1931. We went down to the bank to meet the realtor that sold us the place. He wore a black derby, button shoes, and a black suit that hadn't been out of the moth balls very long. He was a real character.

In 1935 we shopped around and a Mr. Stevenson in Lancaster, east Lancaster, was a well man and we hired him to clean out our well. I took a six month furlough from the Company. We borrowed a tent from our landlady in Glendale, and lived in it, (not knowing how the wind blew up here). The tent ended up torn and we slept under the stars. The first week someone stole all our gasoline and some large planks they were using to clean the well and roll the pipe on. We never did find out who stole our property.

Before we moved up to Palmdale, we decided to fence in a small plot of land and plant some strawberries, so we hauled some fence posts of 4 x 4 redwood. We worked for two days Saturday and Sunday putting the posts in the ground. The next weekend we brought up the wire to put on the posts, and the posts were all gone.

We finally finished the well and had a well with wonderful water. So we had to build a tank house to put the water tank on. We built a 10 x 10 room strong enough to hold a water tank, and we bought a motor that had come out of a fire engine. My brother had to spin the motor to start it, and the only other man who could start this motor was Frank Banta.

We finished the tank house and that's what I lived in until the house was built.

It was about this time that I started to dig a ditch to the area where we were going to put up the house - which was 700' away. We buried the pipe 18" deep so it wouldn't freeze. The first winter we were here we didn't wrap the 3 inch pipe that came down from the water tank to the pipe into the ground and it split all the way down to the ground.

We decided to put alfalfa in so we hired Mr. Kitchen from Lancaster. I helped in surveying the 5 acres. The wind blew hard and cold every day we had to survey.

The person I really wanted to write about was Frank Powers. He had been boarded out as a child. Later he went to college on money willed to him by his grandfather. He studied law and taught school. When he came to California he became a cook and came to Palmdale as a cook on a ranch on Avenue S and 30th Street. He bought an acre of ground nearby. He bought enough lumber to build a house but never built it. He used the dirt he was digging for a cellar and made an adobe house. When we came to Palmdale we met Frank and enjoyed his friendship, especially when we all got together at Crawfords bar in the Palmdale Inn.

As I look back now I wonder how I got along without electricity. I used kerosene to cook with and we had a wood stove for heat. Even to sleeping with a rattlesnake, I wouldn't have missed any of it. It was good experience, all seven years of it.

The other friends I met were the O'Sullivans. They had the service station at Sierra Highway and Avenue R.

The Safeway Store was on the corner of Sierra Highway and Avenue Q-9, the only grocery store in town at the time.

Frank Powers raised chickens and sold some of his eggs to Mrs. Bland who owned the Palmdale Inn.

Mrs. Marie Dill

* *

March 12, 1972

Dear Mr. & Mrs Gordon:

Thank you for your wonderful book of "Incredible Tales." Compiling all those wonderful true stories & letters must have taken many hundreds of hours.

What an honor to have been given one of them. Nothing could have ever pleased me more.

The book arrived on what would have been Daddy's 85th Birthday, were he living. Such a precious & wonderful gift.

Thank you again.

Most sincerely,

Ruth Murray Ely

P.S. A wonderful letter of yours in Dallas Times-H.

P.S. Daddy Ely was born on old Pa in 1888.

THOSE EARLY YEARS

By

Charles Dodd
537 E. Avenue Q-9
Palmdale, California

"Madre de Dios," muttered my maternal grandmother, "This is the end of nowhere." She waved her hand at the expanse of nothing outside the window of the train as we pulled into Palmdale. The trip through Soledad Canyon had been interesting, but now, all of a sudden, we were out on the desert. "Senora," the conductor grinned, "This is only the beginning of nothing. Wait until we get to Mojave where you are going." He was so right.

The year was December, 1915. I was only eight years old and we were on our way to visit my two Uncles, Bob and Bill. They worked for a man named Shafter, who had two grocery stores; one in Mojave and the other in Tehachapi. Uncle Bill would come down to Mojave in a horse and buggy to see us.

It rained and sputtered snow for the two days we spent in Mojave before we returned home to Los Angeles for Christmas with the rest of the family. Grandmother decided then and there that her two sons would be home next Xmas or else.

That was my first introduction to Palmdale and the Antelope Valley.

In the years to follow I came through the Antelope Valley and Palmdale numerous times. We would go to the San Bernardino Mountains up the south side from Los Angeles and go home through Lucerne Valley, Victorville, Palmdale and down Mint Canyon to San Fernando and home. We used to marvel at the real estate signs and the pennants flying in the wind, as the salesmen ushered the prospects around. They had come up on a train excursion, and the sales pitches were really flying. My Dad's comments about the opportunities in those days weren't very complimentary but rather kind of profane. Nevertheless, those were real safaris in a Model T Ford, sometimes taking two days to make the trip.

However, since my Mother's family had come to California in the late 1700's from Mexico and were among the first twelve of the Spanish Dons who settled on land grants given by the Spanish Crown, we felt a kinship to the land behind the mountains, and my Grandfather never missed an opportunity to come to the desert, bringing my youngest Uncle and myself whenever we could come.

The Carrillo family were part and parcel of the Los Angeles and San Gabriel Valley areas, and our cousins of that generation settled in the Santa Barbara area. All together, there were ten ranchos in the family from Santa Rosa to San Diego.

And then in 1947 our coming to live in Antelope Valley was sheer coincidence. We came to visit some former neighbors in Torrance who had originally come from Chicago. The cold got to them and they searched around for months for a place in the sun and finally found it in Acton. Being unattached at the time, it didn't take much to convince us we should move here also. After all, the war years had created wall to wall people in the coastal area. We found a rental, went home, rented a truck, and moved our worldly possessions to Acton. A son, daughter, cat and 1935 Chevvy that almost didn't make it. And the cat hardly made it.

Being a licensed electrical contractor, the next two years saw me wiring cabins, weekend houses, chicken ranches or anything else I could sell a wiring job into.

Then Micky Cochran, the manager of the old Safeway, on Sierra, needed a part time meatcutter for a short period. (I had grown up in the meat business and had a journeyman card), so I worked for Ralph Stumpf who was head meatcutter. The short period turned into five and a half years.

Milly meantime had been working for Dr. John Krauss in Lancaster. He was new to A. V. Then he decided to open an office in Palmdale. Having been a registered nurse all her grown years, Milly fitted in and John moved to Palmdale, renting one of Dom Massari's places on Sierra Highway.

George Suter had built a new house on 11th St. East for Grace and himself, so we bought his nice little house on Q-9, next to Owen and Cora Moulton. It was the only house in town available at that time. We still live there, although we now live in a C-3 zone. It's gone through three zonings since we bought it in 1950.

During the years from 1954 through 1970 until retirement, I spent the years working for General Electric at Edwards and for North American at both Plant 42 and Edwards. Milly spent the years working for Dr. Krauss, then Dr. Lee Patton a number of years, and then after that, helping open up Mira Loma where she spent a few years. She retired because of health reasons.

Our civic efforts have leaned more to the social aspects ever since we have been here. Both of us being long time Scouters, we started by organizing Boy Scout Troop 145 in Acton, and also Girl Scout Troop 1. Over the years that followed, more Troops were formed in A.V.; Littlerock, Lake Hughes, Palmdale, Lancaster, and then in 1960 we retired from Scouting after more than twenty years in the movement.

During the same years efforts we were in Rotary, the AAU, The Fin & Feather Club, and the Sheriff's Reserve Forces. Since retirement from the workaday world our activities have levelled off a great deal. Other than the Fin & Feather, the Sheriff's Posse and our Church, we travel a lot.

Milly, however, keeps up a running stream of personal efforts in many ways. The Board of the Catholic Social Services, her oil painting and Allied Arts Group, her violet garden and the African Violet Club, and of course, Church activities.

Now with Earl and Ruth Jones, Kenny and Olivia Sadler and 78 other retirees we trailer a lot. Although we are not <u>old</u> time pioneers to Palmdale, the twenty five years we have been here we have enjoyed the participation we have been involved with in the growing Palmdale and Antelope Valley.

Story by Augusta Ritter - Now Mrs. Vernon Thompson, 45040 18th St. W., Lancaster, CA
To: Mr. & Mrs. J. Shelton Gordon, 38144 Sixth St. E., Palmdale, CA

December 28, 1971

Dear Mr. & Mrs. Gordon:

What a happy surprise to receive in the mail recently a copy of "Incredible Tales". It is delightful! Thank you so much. Since I had failed to send you my memories, the book was doubly appreciated. Somehow, I had felt that my recollections were not very important in comparison to the real old-timers of Palmdale. However, here they are:

Albert Ritter and I were married in July of 1928. We bought a new little bungalow on Q-9 near 6th St. East. There were only four houses on Q-9 at that time; Frank Ikeler's block house on the southwest corner which is still there, and one owned by Mina and Bill Ritter. Across the street on the northwest corner was a small house and then ours. Jack -in-the-Box is located there now. At the end of Ave. Q-9 was the nice home of Mr. & Mrs. James Bradford. Mr. Bradford owned or managed the only butcher shop in town, which was just across the railroad track on Sierra Highway. Mrs. Bradford would walk over and relieve him for lunch every day. Mrs. Frank Ikeler would do the same for her husband in their General Merchandise Store.

Life flowed on in a slower tempo than today. There were few cars and trucks, and no television. We did have a radio. Everyone knew everyone else. Saturday nights we usually went to a dance at Moore's Hall in town or out to the Munz Ranch at Elizabeth Lake.

In the early 30's the depression was upon us and there were many men riding the freight trains. Since our house was close to the railroad, many a knock came at our back door for a hand-out. We tried to accomodate each request, although our own supplies were limited. Sometimes we wondered if it would ever end.

It did end for us because I was able to go back to Lake Hughes in September of 1932 as the teacher in the one room school there. The salary was $135.00 a month, and I was grateful. In September of 1933 we moved to Leona or Leonise Valley to live on the ranch there where Albert was in partnership with his brothers.

We kept the little bungalow on Ave. Q-9 and rented it until 1941 when we sold it to the Earl Shaffers of Lancaster. Later in 1955 I bought it back. We owned the three lots to the north of this property on Palmdale Boulevard, so by purchasing the Redman corner lot and a vacant lot between, a sizeable plot was put together - thanks to the advice of Mr. Shelton Gordon, a good friend!

So you see, I didn't live in Palmdale very long. Therefor my contribution of memories there is rather meager. However, I <u>am</u> somewhat of an old timer in the valley. My family, the O.O. Dorsetts, came from Indiana in 1913 when I was ten years old. We came by train to Lancaster. There we hired a man to drive us in his car to the Munz Ranch. My uncle, Frank Myrick, owned a ninety acre ranch above Lake Hughes. Later, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans purchased this ranch and two others and called it the "Sky Haven Ranch". It really was up in the sky, or so it seemed to us flat-land "Hoosiers". We children cried all the way up that miserable mountain dirt road behind a creaking old wagon in which Uncle came for us. The Munzes became our very good friends and helped us through two homesick years.

At that time, my father "took up" a homestead in the west end of Antelope Valley in the Fairmont Hills area. There the family lived until 1931, when they moved to Lancaster.

One incident that will never be forgotten happened when I was about fourteen. Mother and I had just walked out from our house about a hundred yards or so when our little dog began barking furiously. We looked to see why all the fuss. There was a huge diamond-backed rattle snake coiled and buzzing just off our path. Mother - always a timid soul - was too frightened to do much but scream. I ran to the house for a long 2 x 4 board or pole, and with it I pounded and smacked that snake to a pulp. Then the dog began more furious barking, and within a few feet there was the mate, equally big and buzzing. It too took a terrible pounding. No doubt that I was very frightened. However, I remember that I was terribly angry - angry because those snakes had frightened my mother, and Mother had a weak heart, or so we thought. She lived through many an ordeal. Just this year, in January of 1971, she died at the age of 94 1/2.

After the snake killing incident, I persuaded my father to teach me to shoot a twenty-two rifle and my snake killing was a little easier. I can still hit a target with a 22 rifle, thanks to that early training.

"The Lord surely must have cared for those early pioneers, or they never would have made it," Mrs. Lyle Sadler said, and I echo that. We withstood a windstorm in 1915 that ripped our porch and roof off of part of the house. Another time a grass-fire swept around the very edge of our home. After a soaking rain, the house slid off its foundation. In all these incidents no one was hurt. For many years we never were in a doctor's or dentist's office. Mother and Father were doctor and nurse.

We older children were sent away from home to live with friends to attend high school, as the A.V. High School was not accredited for the University at that time. After high school I attended the University of California (Southern Branch) and received my teaching credential. At that time (1924-27) I returned to Lake Hughes and taught the eight grades there for three years. I became restless and felt that I had had enough of this area, so I went to Templeton School near El Monte and taught a fifth grade for one year. Fate took a hand at that time. On March 12-13 at midnight of 1928 the St. Francis Dam broke. My sister, her husband and three children lived under that dam. Sister, her baby son and one other man were all that were saved in the settlement of some 75 persons who lived just below the dam. The flood of waters swept through Piru, Fillmore and on to the sea. Over four hundred persons lost their lives. Many bodies were never recovered.

During the nightmare weeks that followed, my dear friend and sweetheart Albert Ritter stood by us all so faithfully that I began to realize the true values of life and so came back to become a true and loyal Valleyite.

I have been a rancher's wife, a mother of three children, a teacher, mostly in the Westside Schools, and a community worker.

In 1962, after being a widow for seven years, Vernon Thompson, an old-time suitor from Blythe and Pomona, looked me up. He had lost his wife two years before, and so we were married. We have had ten wonderful years together. This little verse expresses our feelings about Antelope Valley:

The blue skies of the desert
The star bright nights
The windswept plains
Its warmth and light
Give peace for the soul
And rest at night!
Our home - we love it.

Augusta & Vernon Thompson

Augusta & Vernon Thompson

From: Dora H. Wilkin, 1725 Pine Street, Huntington Beach, CA. 92648
January 24, 1972

Dear Mrs. Maris:

You asked me to write some of our recollections of the Palmdale we knew from 1932 to 1944.

My husband bought the Palmdale Pharmacy from Fred Fehrensen and arrived in Palmdale on Valentines Day in a snowstorm. He stayed at the Pearlands Hotel which was then run by Mr. Fehrensen's wife and mother-in-law, Mrs. Bryans. He rented one of the Wheelock Courts for us and the furniture and I arrived soon after. Our daughter, Joanne, was born in Lancaster in the old hospital belonging to Dr. Seth Savage. In 1939 we built the house on Avenue Q-9 which we sold to the Jerry Chases when we moved, and who still live there.

What do we remember about the Palmdale years?

We remember that we didn't use telephone numbers in those days, although we had them. The drugstore was Palmdale 1. We just cranked the phone and told operator Ruth Varner who we wanted. I recall asking her for Helen Wykoff and her saying, "She isn't home. I just saw her go by."

We remember building the Palmdale Woman's Club building, the old library building and renting it to the County in order to pay for it. I was president of the Woman's Club at the time and Josie Sadler, librarian.

We remember the Southern Pacific's first "Daylight Limited" coming through from Los Angeles to San Francisco, the first "fast train". Everyone gathered on the drugstore corner to watch and one man was heard to remark, "I'm agin' it. If you ain't got time to get where you're goin' you ain't got no business startin' ".

We remember Palmdale school's first kindergarten. Bob was on the school board and I secured the 25 signatures necessary to start a kindergarten. You see, I'd been a kindergarten teacher and wanted Joanne to go to kindergarten.

We remember the annual surprise parties Howard Bland had for his wife, Agnes. Sometimes at the Palmdale Inn and sometimes at Alley's Garage.

We remember the opening day of fishing season at Littlerock Dam and the city fathers digging for worms in the honeysuckle vine behind the drugstore. I guess the scrubwater emptied there was nourishing.

We remember the volunteer fire department and the time they drove the truck up the street to find out where the fire was. Another time they forgot the hose, but all in all they did a good job and we were thankful for them.

We remember the war years. We remember Muroc, as Edwards Air Force Base was then called, was not the place it is today. Temporary buildings, sage-brush and wind. I went with other Gray Ladies to help out. We remember the Japanese coming through Palmdale by train and bus enroute to internment at Manzanar. We remember the blackouts and how frightened we were the first few times. We remember the Observation Posts which we manned 24 hours a day in 4 hour shifts lest a Japanese plane slip through. We remember our USO which rapidly outgrew first a building on the school grounds then an office building "downtown" and ended up in the old Moores' Garage. We were justly proud of our volunteers.

So many, many people come to mind as I write; the Schoellers, the Manguns, the Wiskersons, the Mennigs, Dr. and Mrs. J.B. Price, Helen and Farel Wykoff and her mother, Mrs. Temple, Jack Harris, and Georgia Graves (Sherlock).

Good years those Palmdale years. I want to thank you for asking me to recall them.

Sincerely,

Dora H. Wilkin

The Story of Cletis and Leona Gray, Immigrants from Topeka, Kansas, arriving in Lancaster November 15, 1941.

As we were en route from Topeka, Kansas, to a new destination and new home in Petaluma, California, we were contemplating that the desert was a pretty desolate place for people to have to live. As we rode along the highway that night, the moon was full and looked like it was daylight. Our daughter Donna Gray, aged ten, commented that the sage brush wasn't very pretty and it was a long way from Barstow to Lancaster.

We were pulling a two wheel trailer with our sole belongings in it when we had a flat two miles west of Lancaster. As the tires were obsolete, we had no spare, so we had to drive on into the Gratt Kennedy ranch on the rim, which was our destination for the night. Being a nephew of my mother, we were meeting them for the first time, and not sure of where they lived, drove up and down 90th St. West and right to Avenue A and all the time were making such a noise with our flat that Gratt Kennedy put on his yard light to see what was going on, thinking someone had gotten married and was celebrating.

The next morning was a beautiful day. The air was so fresh and clean, but the sage brush still looked ominous to us. We were supposed to stay only overnight and resume our journey to Petaluma, but my husband went in to Lancaster with my cousin. While there, my cousin convinced us that there was work here in Antelope Valley, that we need not go on to Petaluma and be among strangers, when our relatives were here. But we still didn't think much of this dry, windy old desert.

We were introduced to Frank Rottman, who had an alfalfa ranch on 90th St. and Avenue A, and oddly enough was looking for a man and wife to work on his ranch. So after talking to him and listening to his offer, we decided to give it a try. He also had a water well drilling rig. My job was to cook for all the hungry ranch hands, and believe me, I didn't know men and boys could eat so much.

My husband worked on the ranch in the alfalfa field and all the other jobs that go with ranch work.

Our daughter, Donna, graduated from the 8th grade from the old Rogers School, along with several other children - Kenneth Anderson, Buddy Lahite, the Ferdeen sisters, the Shaffstall boys.

The fall of 1944 we decided to make a move to Woodlake, California, in the San Joaquin Valley. We bought a small ranch one mile south of Woodlake. We had 8 milk cows, a wonderful garden with boysenberries and strawberries, and we were close to St. John's river to fish.

My husband and I both worked in the orange and grape packing houses around Woodlake for about a year, then Cletis managed a Shell Service Station in that town and our daughter started high school there.

We lived there for three years, but my husband didn't care for the country and climate up that way. So we came back to Lancaster in 1948. He went back to work for Mr. Rottman, only this time he tested water wells for him and was away from home quite a lot. He worked steady for him all this time.

In May of 1950, we had a home built on Avenue K and 18th St. West. We lived there till 1955, when we had a home built in Quartz Hill and lived there.

In 1957 my husband took the well rig to Yerington, Nevada, and drilled wells there for six months. We lived in a mobile trailer while there, and on week ends we would sight-see all over Nevada.

In October, 1955, when the A.V. Hospital opened, I started work there and am still working there.

Mr. Gray's health wouldn't permit him to do any more well drilling, so in August of 1958, he started to work at Edwards Air Force Base. He is still there as of now as a plumber.

Our daughter graduated from high school in Lancaster in 1949. Her daughter Pamela graduated from the same high school in 1969. Her son Albert Lee will graduate from the same high school in 1974. So all in all, we've had a good life since coming to Antelope Valley. But we are getting a little tired, so the good Lord willing, my husband and I will retire August 31st of this year (1973).

We've seen Lancaster grow to a thriving city and most probably, it will keep on growing.

We hope to take it easy and try to enjoy ourselves from here on doing such things as traveling in our travel trailer and seeing some country we haven't seen.

We have two grandchildren, Pamela Potter, who is a beauty operator in Lancaster, and Albert Lee, who is a junior in high school. Our daughter's husband is William Scofield, who has Mony Ins. Co. in Lancaster. She is receptionist for Dr. Cowell.

By Leona Gray
Now at 44100 N. 20th St. E., Lancaster, CA Space #38

AN INTERESTING REPORT BY NAOMI DARR SPANGENBERG

Naoma Darr Spangenberg was born in the Rand Mining town of Atolia in 1918. Her father, Charles M. Darr, was employed in the tungston mines there, and he and his wife, Jeanette M. Darr, moved to their homestead on Avenue B and about 150th Street East shortly thereafter. They lived there until the U.S. Government bought the property for Edwards Air Force Base.

Naoma attended grammar school with her two sisters at another one room school, the first Antelope School, then located at Avenue B and 120th Street East. They attended Antelope Valley Joint Union High School and Antelope Valley Junior College. She and her husband, Kenneth G. Spangenberg, who also graduated from Antelope Valley High, have lived in Leona Valley since their marriage in 1945, although Ken and his parents moved there in 1927.

A HISTORY OF THE LEONIS VALLEY AND LEONA VALLEY ONE ROOM SCHOOLS

The following is a resume of a talk given by Naoma Darr Spangenberg on the occasion of the dedication on November 9, 1965, of the present Leona Valley Elementary School located at the corner of 90th Street West and Leona Avenue in Leona Valley. Information regarding the first schools was obtained from actual students, some of whom are now deceased, and from residents who had compiled data on this subject. Some of the informants were Chris Eichenhofer, Fritz Eichenhofer, Emil Ritter, William Ritter, Augusta Ritter Thompson, Otto Miller, Freida Eichenhofer Murphy, W. Henry Murphy, Kenneth G. Spangenberg, Mrs. Burg, Rita Kennedy and Elise R. Johnson.

The first school was built about 1879 and was a small building on the sharp turn in Bouquet Canyon Road, north of the old Eichenhofer vineyard, now known as DeRosiers Lilac Ranch, almost exactly 1 1/2 miles south of the Bouquet Canyon-Elizabeth Lake Road corner. Leona Valley was then known as Leonis Valley.

The second school was in a draw, sheltered from the winds, with a well close by. It was built through community cooperation on the Rouff Ranch, now owned by Juan Arrache.

On March 5, 1895, the Leonis School District was formed with Trustees Arch Wilson, Marcus Andrade, George Hoelling and David Bassler.

In the Bouquet Canyon School District a school was built further south on Bouquet Canyon Road on the Biddison Ranch, now the Canyon Oaks Ranch, which the children in that area attended. Two students, Joe and Otto Miller, were required to attend that school because their home was within the Bouquet Canyon School District. Their father preferred the Leonis School, and with the help of friends, moved his house into the Leonis School District. A survey later revealed the home to be still in the Bouquet Canyon District, so Joe and Otto were enrolled back in that school.

In 1903 or 1904, Fred Godde donated an acre of land at the corner of Bouquet Canyon and Elizabeth Lake Roads and the local residents erected a small green school house. It was discovered that the building had been built partially on the donated land and partially on the land still owned by the Goddes, and a controversy arose with some believing that more land should be donated and others wanting it purchased. The School District finally bought the additional land.

The first well at this location was hand dug and north of the building. The water was full of sulphur, had to be boiled, and was smelly and most unsatisfactory. Another well south of the property produced good water, eliminating the need to haul drinking water to the school.

One teacher taught all eight grades, with an average of twenty pupils. One early teacher, Mr. Ingham, often walked from Palmdale where he lived.

Other teachers were Mr. Yager and Mr. West and Mr. McNeil. There were no school busses, and the children walked if they lived only 2 miles away, or rode horses or donkeys and in some cases drove a horse and buggy. Only a very heavy snow closed the school. The Armagosa Creek always had plenty of water, and dams were built for swimming in the summer after school, and in the winter the pond east of the Ritter Park Sportsmans Club froze, and the children skated in their bare feet, no one having skates. Since they were barefoot most of the year, they had very calloused feet. Most of the children had to hurry home to chop wood, milk cows, help with the hay or grapes as the season and their parents demanded.

The teacher usually boarded with the Wilsons on the present Rathbun Ranch, and at least one man teacher bailed hay during the summer. William Ritter recalled delivering a monthly pay check to a Miss Biddison. There were no deductions, but the check was for only $65.00.

The school was the center of the community and used for all social gatherings, dances, parties, elections, church and the Mothers' Club, later known as the Women's Club.

Mark Keppel was the Los Angeles County Superintendent of Schools for years. He had no deputies and he made a point of personally visiting each school every two or three months.

In 1915 there came a need for a larger school. This one, painted yellow with a red roof was built by a contractor for $1,500.00. A cast iron stove was the only source of heat, and kerosene lamps supplied lights for the parties until electricity was available. This building can be seen at the Ritter Park Sportsmans Club where it serves as an office and clubhouse. The green school house was then used as a wood shed and a barn for the students' horses.

The budget did not allow for playground equipment, so the various organizations, and the Mothers' Club in particular, supplied these items for the schools. In 1912 or 1913 a Mrs. Kitchline gave each of her students a toothbrush and tooth paste for Christmas. Reportedly for some it was their first. Another teacher gave each an orange, and since this present is recalled so clearly and with such pleasure, an orange must have been an extraordinary treat.

The outstanding event of each year was the Christmas Program that each teacher was expected to put on. To a great extent it was on the basis of the children's performances that the parents judged the teacher, for they seldom made visits during the school hours.

In 1938 a modern building consisting of one large room, a stage, small kitchen, running water and inside restrooms was built. This building complied with all structural requirements for fire, earthquake and general safety.

In 1944 a second teacher was hired to teach the primary grades. In 1948 the school was unified with the Westside Union School District and only the Kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grades were left at Leona, with the upper grades attending Del Sur School at 9000 West Avenue H in Lancaster.

In 1957 two new teachers were employed and the Leona Valley Community Building was utilized as an additional school by dividing the main room to accommodate the 3rd and 4th grades, who had been going to Del Sur, and the upper half of the second grade. This did not prove as satisfactory as had been anticipated and the following year these children attended school at Quartz Hill rather than at Del Sur.

In 1965 the present school was completed, which employs 6 teachers with 185 students from Kindergarten through the sixth grade. On Friday, June 11, 1965, the last and 6th one-room school house in the Leona Valley, and probably the last one-room school in Los Angeles County was closed and locked. In April 1973 the building was razed by the present owners of the land.

NOEL N. AND ORA NEAL
HOMESTEADERS IN JUNIPER HILLS
Antelope Valley, Los Angeles County, CA
5 June 1922 to May 1971
Reported and Written by Luther Little

At the end of World War I, the Los Angeles Times newspaper carried a notice for the war veterans that homestead land was available in Antelope Valley. The Neals took advantage of this offer and chose 320 acres on the Griffin Road, about four miles south of Highway 138. The local residents had named Griffin Road in honor of Mr. Griffin, a retired railroad man. On a Valley map, this road is 106th Street East and begins at Highway 138 and runs south to the San Gabriel Mountain foothills then turns east on Juniper Hills Road until it comes to Longview Road, then north to the village of Pearblossom on Highway 138, thus forming a loop road.

Mr. James Booth, a local surveyor, gave the foothill area the name Juniper Hills because so many large juniper bushes grew on the mountain slopes. This name was accepted by the other homesteaders.

On June 5th, 1922, Mr. Neal camped on his property until he could build a one-room shelter and some chicken coops. Chicken raising was his livlihood. Baby chicks were sent down from Petaluma in Northern California by mail. During later years, Neal made his living by carpentry work and upkeep repairs for other people.

Mail was received by a Star Route. The post office in Littlerock was a small wooden frame building just north of Highway 138 on the east side of 82nd Street. Groceries were purchased in Littlerock from a Mr. William Morse, whose store was in a two story poured cement building at the northeast corner of 77th Street and 138. Mr. Morse sold out to a Mr. Lewis, then Mr. Jay Stockton opened up an eating place, winding up with a grocery store. This building was torn down to make way for a new store building by a Mr. Woodrow W. Wade, who put in a fine line of groceries. Banking was done in Palmdale in a one man bank run by a Mr. Milo Hunt and his secretary, Miss Gladys Taylor.

In 1934 Mr. Neal built a larger home out of cobble-stones with all modern comforts. This house still stands today. A new well was put in for a greater water supply. In the early days, spring water was used.

The Neals were very friendly and kind to all those about them, and in time of need by others, the Neals would be there to help. Much time was devoted to church work and support. Mr. Neal was very active in the Veterans of the First World War and the American Legion, and is still active today even though he is in his eighties. From 1947 to 1960, Neal served on the Kepple Union School Board in Littlerock.

On July 6, 1948, a group of hillside people got together to draw up the Articles of Incorporation of the Juniper Hills and Cima Mesa Community Association. Copies of the Articles were mailed out to all the land owners in the vicinity. On August 7th, 1948, over a hundred people gathered at the Noel Neal home to discuss the Association and the acceptance of the Articles and bylaws of the same.

Mr. G. M. Cuthbertson was made the first president. He donated the land for a club house on 106th Street East just above the Neal home. Membership dues of ten dollars, and some monetary donations, provided money to get the club house started. It was a hard pull to raise money; thus many types of entertainment, rental to others for the use of the club house, country store sales, art shows, weddings, pot luck dinners, etc. Many members donated their time when the club house was under construction, with Noel Neal as the superintendant. Along about this time the women-folks formed Junibees with a membership of 18 to begin with. The Junibees were a great help to the Association.

Hope Skinner, Kay Roth and Olive Dunsmore devoted more than their share of time supervising various Association activities besides raising money every way they could.

During 1951 Hack Snider with his bulldozer leveled off the building site for the club house and the roads beside the area for out door benches which were used for out door events and for the Easter Sunrise religious play held each year. This has become a Valley-wide event.

When Noel Neal was president of the Association, he was able to persuade Mr. R. J. Hadden, general manager of the Pacific Telephone and Telegraph Company, to install telephones in Juniper Hills. Eight party lines were put in during 1951. When Mr. Neal served on the road committee for the Association, he was able to get the county to pave the roads.

In 1971 the Neals sold their property and moved to a small home on 77th Street East in Littlerock. In 1972 Mrs. Neal died. Mr. Neal keeps active with his World War I Veterans and Legion. A hobby he enjoys is the raising of beautiful chrysanthemums and iris. The flowers were shared with many friends. Believe it or not, he is also a very fine cook and has requests from women friends for his recipes. He is often called upon to bring a favorite dish to pot luck dinners or luncheons. Mr. Neal is a great man and friend to many.

Best wishes to all,

Luther Little
Long time resident of Juniper Hills
and now of Littlerock

WILSONA SCHOOL

by

Mrs. Harry Graham

1933

Wilsona School, situated twenty-two miles east of Lancaster on a most modern paved boulevard, surrounded on the north by the Piute Butte of Yato-Kya, on the south by the Lovejoy Buttes, and on the east by the Saddle-Back Buttes, sits quietly in its desert setting of sage-brush, cactus, and wild flowers, the perfect little one room, one teacher, rural school of song and story. Built in 1916 close to the Wilsona Post Office, with 16 children from homesteading families initially enrolled, it was moved in 1921 to its present site. Wilsona School today boasts of 35 pupils, coming in from a radius of 10 miles by bus, though at one time in its history, attendance dropped to but a single child. In all these years the school grounds have been bare of shrubs or trees, as the range cattle during the summer months have repeatedly destroyed all the beauty the nine different teachers and their classes have struggled to create. Were it not for the deluge of gorgeous wild flowers, surpassing description that carpet the vicinity during the spring months and the inspiring beauty of the mountain ranges during all the months of the year, the children would find little to uplift them about the school surroundings. However, inside the small building, which also houses a branch of the Los Angeles County Public Library, all is activity and interest and there the children proceed to acquire an education which graduates them with pride and confidence on to the Antelope Valley Joint Union High School or any other high school of its standing.

A Short Story by Verne R. Smith

June 26, 1972

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
38144 6th St. E.
Palmdale, Calif.

Dear Shelton:

Thank you very much for the book of "Incredible Tales". You did a real job of getting so many people to contribute such a variety of interesting letters.

When you first wrote to me of your project, I assumed you wanted "Real Early Old Timers", and I did not think I qualified as my experience in the Valley was from early in 1920. However, if you find my ramblings might be of interest to your collections, here goes.

As you well know, you, Shelton, and I were school mates in Pasadena High School back in 1914. Many a pleasant week end was spent at the Gordon Cabin in the Arroyo Seco back in those days.

Then along came World War I which changed many things.

After returning from the Service in the Navy in 1919, with my wife, the former Agnes Sommerville, we began looking for land to develop in Antelope Valley.

Finally, early in 1920, we purchased land in the San Andreas Ranch area owned by the McAdam family. This property was on what is now known as Avenue S west of presently 47th Street East. This was developed into a Bartlett pear orchard.

Only part of Mint Canyon was paved at that time, so, when we moved from Pasadena to our ranch property, we followed the old Acton Road for the balance of the trip.

As most writings of the 1920 Era include many of the Valley families -- some now gone -- some still here -- this may be of interest. Here are some who helped the Valley exist and eventually build what we have today.

Emery Kidd was raising range stock along the foothills; then later butchered and sold the meat next to Ekler's General Store on Palmdale's main street, now Sierra Highway: then next to the south was the telephone office with a few phone lines to the south; and then the Post Office. Adjoining that, Freddie Fehrensen dispensed medicine and ice cream. Going north on the main drag was Mother Moore's Hotel and Restaurant with her famous pear pies. Then to the west, Southern Pacific Railroad Agent Simpson ruled over the depot.

Many a time we would ride the Booster Engine up the Vincent grade to the "Y" and then dead head back to Palmdale.

To the south of town was the Lindsey Family with orchard and willow trees, part of which now is held by the grandchildren.

The writer transported dynamite and caps used to open up the Barrel Spring water flow just north of the present Feather River Canal.

Of course a lot of us belonged to what was then the Palmdale Gun Club. We had good hunting on the Palmdale Reservoir and on Una Lake.

We would ride north on the black locust tree lined road to Lancaster to see the occasional "flickers" featuring such movies as "Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse."

In 1920, the writer cleared and planted to pears the acreage purchased in the San Andreas Ranch area from the McAdam family holdings. Here, along with Frank, Bill, Bob, and Fred McAdam, the pear orchard planting was about 1000 acres. To the south, on what is now East Avenue T, Joe Martin, our fiddler for dances in those days, had his orchards.

Our mail carrier was no other than George Taylor, now of Lancaster.

In the early 1920s, Harold Pegler was the Horticulture Inspector. He lived in one of the Davis houses then south of where the Los Angeles County Headquarters is now located.

Fred Young, Bob McAdam, and the writer were putting on boxing fights in the old Palmdale Dance Hall.

The very poor returns for our pear crops from the Commission Merchants forced some of the growers to build the precooling plant in Palmdale. However, previous to that time, the writer hauled tons of pears to the Pasadena Ice Plant to be stored and sold during the holidays to Pasadena hotels and stores.

The Cliff Stewart family owned pear orchards in what is now "Four Points" area.

Fire wood was obtained from along the foothills, using a team of horses and a log chain to pull out the juniper stumps left from earlier cutting of the juniper for fence posts.

In clearing a section of land near what is now Avenue T and 47th Street, the writer was forced to kill literally dozens of rattlesnakes. Incidentally, the old ditch which carried water to the original Palmdale town site crossed the rattlesnake infested section of land being cleared.

Progress was coming to Antelope Valley. Electricity was finally available to this writer's home in 1923. The Littlerock Dam was being built in Littlerock Creek, claimed in those days to be the highest multiple arch dam ever constructed.

The Myrtle Breslin family were living then near the base of the dam.

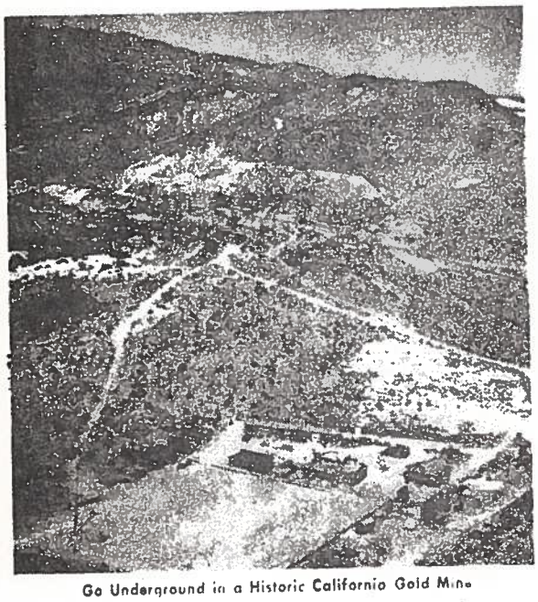
Lew Dorr was the U.S. Forest Service ranger at Valyermo; a real Forest Officer.

In 1924, the big event, on December 26, a son, Lowell Martin Smith, was born to parents, Verne and Agnes Smith.

Best regards to you.

Verne R. Smith

VRS:gs



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May 17, 1973

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
38144 6th St. East
Palmdale, California 93550

Dear Shelton:

First let me add my congratulations on your 1971 publication of "Incredible Tales". As you and I know, there has been very little history written about Palmdale, and as a native son of your fair city, I really enjoyed reading the stories of many of the pioneer families sent in to you.

When I heard that you were gathering material for a further publication, I became very interested. I am hoping that this story by a Palmdale pioneer, Mr. Evan Evans, will be some help to you. As a small boy growing up in Palmdale, I was intrigued by the stories that Mr. Evans would tell.

Thanks to Mrs. Ted (Dorothy Guenther) Jones who recorded this material after an interview with Mr. Evans, we can all share some of his interesting tales. I came across this story recently in the Lancaster library while doing research on Antelope Valley history.

Sincerely yours,

Glen A. Settle

STORY BY EVAN EVANS OF PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA

Submitted by Glen A. Settle

When I came here the Indians used to come through and gather pinions and shoot deer. They used to camp at Barrel Springs and go to the ranch owned by Cal Jeffrys. I came in 1890. There was no Palmdale here at that time. It was two miles east of here. This town started in 1892 between May and December. The oldest house in Palmdale is the Pearland Hotel. That was moved from Santa Monica in pieces.

Herald was Alpine Station, Herald Town, and Trego Post Office. It had three names, and there were only about four houses. John Watkins ran the store and saloon. There were two saloons, two houses, and a depot. Doctor Michael laid out this town, and Doctor Fink started it. The old square roofed house two miles from here was his residence. The town was settled by Russians and Germans. They had a nice place out there. In '85 there was a school in old Palmdale. The old church building they had is now by the lake. Meyr was the preacher here.

The Hotel Pearland was the first building in this town in 1892. A man by the name of John Woff ran the saloon here, and Jacob Shearer put up the store where Billy Moore lives now. There was no regular development here. There was nothing done then until about nineteen hundred to amount to anything. The ditch was started in 1896 and finished in 1897. The first water went to the reservoir. There were few people here then and practically all of them worked for the railroad company. They also used to haul some gypsum here at that time. Belle used to haul it from a bed about a mile from here.

Quite a few miners came around here all the time. Coal had a horse ranch in Littlerock. They found trees would do good so they put in an orchard. They would bring people here by the dozens from Chicago to buy land. There was a good deal of dry farming done four miles east of here. This place was dry farmed too. There was a deep well on the other side of the track by the school house. When they built the ditch they had two or three dry years.

There was a little school where Bill Wines lives now. It was moved along side Fred Alley's place. Herald did not have over a dozen pupils at the most in those days. They had a big school in old Palmdale, but when the Germans left and the town moved there was only one child left in Palmdale, so they used to hire a teacher with four or five children in order to keep the school.

The Germans left when the war started. Most of these people came directly from Germany, and quite a few came from Nebraska. The whole valley at that time was a cattle country. The Pallet and the Mathis boys had lots of cattle.

There was a dispute over who was to be road foreman. They were elected by the vote of the people in the district at that time, which was twenty-one years ago. There were six road districts here then. This district has over one thousand miles of road now. The farming industry in Littlerock colony and Almondale colony helped to build up this town. There was a lot of grain raised in the valley too. There were sixteen or eighteen horses to a team when they brought in grain. A lot of ranches near Elizabeth Lake used to run hogs wild years ago. There never was a settlement out that way until they put in Lake Hughes. When Littlerock started it put lots of men to work. Schoeller had charge of the work of leveling two sections in 1903-04. At that time there wasn't a graded road in the country.

The Big Horn Mine started in 1893. This helped the town out, because it employed quite a few people. I worked there in 1894. It is right on North Baldy.

Shippy, Vincent, and Lansing found it and they sold it to a big mining company. Mellis was one of the chief men in it. Everything was hauled from here to the mine, and packed on up where the road ended. Automobile races took place when they built a road up there. Rues and Fenner used to run races, and Fenner used his famous old machine called "Black Bess".

All this country was first planted into almonds. All of Littlerock was planted into almonds at one time. Then they planted prunes, and pulled them out, and planted pears. Chickens were not raised on a large scale, and they would trade in their few eggs for groceries. At that time a man got fifteen dollars a month and board. I got $2.50, and that was big pay. We worked nine hours.

People used to haul stuff across the desert through Barrel Springs, and another route was the west end going through San Francisquito Canyon. I made the first decent road through Bouquet. Bears were plentiful in those days. There were quite a few antelopes here too. They used to round them up in bunches of five or six hundred before I came. The people just killed them off for the sport of killing them. In those days vultures were here. You hardly see them anymore. They were bigger than those of South America. There also used to be lots of eagles in those days, and wild pigeons. They used to rustle a lot of cattle here in 1894-95. Mace Maise was constable and he was the biggest thief in the country. Crane was a cattle thief too, and they called him Three Fingered Jack. He was convicted for stealing cattle. Maise never was tried because he skipped. They stole a lot of cattle from here.

The real Antelope Valley is a small place by Fairmont. This is really the Mojave Desert.

In one of the papers in Los Angeles they started to give a lot from this valley with every subscription of the paper. They planted the lots and the people got the deeds to them.

When they started Littlerock they had a town site laid out in Section 32. They had planned to build a court house, and everything that was needed. Everyone was supposed to live in this community and then go to work on their orchards. Their orchards were supposed to be where Littlerock is now, and they were to live in Section 32. This plan did not last long.

Bulkley came here in 1893 and he has been judge ever since.

In the winter time they used to drive thousands of sheep through the mountains. They would feed them on the desert in the winter time and in the summer time they would take them to the mountains. They wouldn't leave any food for the horses. If you wanted to speak to the people herding them, they would say "No savy"; that was all you could get out of them. These people were Basque. They came from the Pyranees Mountains down by Spain and France. They were Spanish people.

The first work on the reservoir was in 1897. We had dry years then. The first water that came through there was on the Fourth of July. We had a big celebration then.

The wind does not blow at all as hard now as it used to. Many times we had to quit work on account of it. I have seen snow in this place eighteen inches on the level. It was seven feet deep by the depot on Thanksgiving Day in 1906. It was up to your head and over your neck in some places. Hundreds of tons of yucca wood has been shipped away from here. They also used to haul gypsum away from here regularly.

The people who are here now came gradually.

The school on the other side of the railroad was built by bond issue in 1897-98. It was two stories high, but some one dynamited and shot the second story off.

At one time they started to grow wild rhubarb here because the roots made fine tanning for leather. They planted acres of it but nothing ever came of it. There were all kinds of herbs here for medicine. The erbazenda was used for cough medicine. Martin used to ship a lot of it away. Many wild almonds and olives used to grow in this valley. They used to grow on big bushes. The leaves look like those on the trees only they are smaller. There are also a lot of goose berries and raspberries down in Bouquet Canyon.

The old Fort Tajon road that goes to Barrel Springs used to be the old stage route to San Francisco. When I came here there used to be an old adobe there used for a stage station. They usually took from four to six horses to haul them. There wasn't a spring in the whole thing. They used to come down about every two days. They used to come from Herald down to Old Palmdale; then after awhile they used to come to Big Rock. There was nothing but sand from here to Lancaster in those days. There was no road then. Practically all of the town started when the railroad went through. The route to Los Angeles from here was through Soledad Canyon. They had to go through Fremont Pass, and cross the water about seventy-five times. Acton was the biggest town in those days. There were miners from all over the country there. Boys used to come in with their gold and weigh it on the scale. There were quite a few miners up there by Gleason Mine. Everybody used to bring in their ore to Hubbard by the summit, who owned a custom mill, and he used to grind out the ore for them.

At one time in the valley horses were so plentiful the saying would be "If you buy a halter they will give you the horse." There were hundreds of wild horses here then, but they used to spoil more good horses trying to catch them than they were worth.

During the jack-rabbit deluge it was nothing for a person to kill three or four jack-rabbits. I killed seventeen with one shot once. When you went out at night it looked like the ground was moving, there were so many rabbits. Many times I would start to Bouquet Canyon and without moving from the spot I would shoot twelve.

While we were having some terrible winds in the valley they had a lot of lumber up on Littlerock Creek and one night some of it blew five miles away. A man came up from the city and said "These people are sure careless about their work."

In 1916 they had a terrible windstorm here. Two old fellows started down to the drug store, and they started to walk back. They took two or three steps when they started to run, and they had to go one-fourth of a mile on the other side of the hotel before they could stop. Their whiskers were blown straight out in front of them, and maybe you don't think they were a sight.

I used to kill rattle snakes by the dozen. Once one crawled in the hole, and I lit a candle, and he stuck his head out and extinguished the flame. We used to get $2.50 apiece for large ones, and we would catch them with a piece of wire and a stick. I had one in a glass jar for a year. He stayed alive and he didn't eat anything. Then one morning when it was cold they put him in the oven to revive him and they forgot about putting the snake in there, so he was baked when we took him out.

One time a fellow having a little more liquor than he could handle was loaded on the back of a wagon. He fell asleep and then fell off the wagon. When the men missed him, they went back to find him. There were bear tracks all around him, and the fellow was still sleeping untouched.

LOWELL M. SMITH
REALTOR
35601 CHESEBORO ROAD
PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA
944-1225

FOUR POINTS
5544 PEARBLOSSOM HIGHWAY
PALMDALE
944-2131

VERNE R. SMITH
REALTOR

VERNE R. SMITH
REALTOR
35605 CHESEBORO ROAD
PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA
944-2028

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May 3, 1973

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
38144 North 6th Street East
Palmdale, Calif. 93550

Dear Shelton:

Thank you for your letter regarding the "Incredible Tales". I thought the first episode I sent you should end in 1924 for me. However, life goes on, so enclosed are a few more ramblings.

Continuing to farm in the Valley until 1927, on a portion of the San Andreas Ranch. At this time, having disposed of our holdings, we returned to Pasadena.

Shortly thereafter, the writer joined the U.S. Forest Service, serving as Ranger in the Arroyo Seco, Mt. Lowe, Mt. Gleason areas, as well as along the Front Country.

Then, in 1935, came the assignment as Chief Fire Dispatcher; also in charge of Fire Control on the Angeles National Forest.

After several years of service in the Angeles National Forest, the writer was asked to take over as General Superintendant of Sunny Hills Ranch in Orange County. This ranch comprised over 3000 acres of citrus.

During the following 14 years, the writer served on numerous Orange County Boards, as well as Rationing Control during World War II.

Along the way, our son, Lowell, served during World War II as a Commissioned Officer in the U.S. Navy. Lowell and Mary, his wife, have three children; Michael, Terrie, and Laura, all of whom attended Antelope Valley schools.

In 1942, I was elected Commander of American Legion Post 142 at Fullerton.

Finally, in 1950, the urge to return to Antelope Valley was too strong to resist. From then on to the present time, with our son, Lowell M. Smith, farming and land development have occupied our time.

Very best regards to you,

Verne R. Smith

P.S. Some of the Old Timers from Pasadena who helped make Antelope Valley what it is today include the following: Dr. Cass Smith, Brant Gard, John Coffeen, Bill McAdam, Frank McAdam, Bob McAdam, Fred McAdam, Chris Manning, and Harold C. Pegler.

Letter from Phyllis Munz Damann
To J. Shelton Gordon
Re: Second Edition of "Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of Some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers"

March - April, 1972

Dear Mr. Shelton Gordon:

I am Phyllis Munz Damann, Eli Munz's daughter. Since my Uncle Arnold wrote you I decided to help out in the Second Edition. This is a marvelous idea you had for the veneration of the pioneers.

I got my mother-in-law, Zetta Damann, to dictate a letter to you for the history of Elizabeth Lake. You see, I married Jay and Zetta's son, Lester, on May 20, 1939. He was one of three boys. He had two brothers, Julius Bertram (7/12/1915 - 3/29/1963) and Carl Grant (11/9/1918 - 8/29/1943). Carl was born when the Armistice was signed and died in World War II when his plane was shot down accidentally by the American side in Casablanca. Julius was a victim of chemical warfare. He sold Malithion. It got on him and killed him just like it did the bugs...destroyed his nervous system.

Zetta never mentioned the ranch next door to her in those days, which was the Hefner Ranch. "Papa Jay", as we called him, told me about Ed Hefner and how he met his wife. He drove the stage over the Freemont Trail and the Butterfield Trail. One of his stops, while his horses were being watered, he struck up a conversation with a little boy who was hanging on the fence. He could see the boy's beautiful sister looking out the window from the house, which was set back from the fence. Ed told the boy to go ask his sister if she wanted to get married. Ed could see her poking her brother in the ribs and could hear her reply, "Tell him Yes, tell him Yes!"...so Ed went into the house and talked to her parents - loaded her up, Kit - Kat and Kaboodle, and took her to town on his stage. They were married by a Father named Joaquin Murietta (and we think our kids do scandalous things today). Later on they moved to Elizabeth Lake from Willow Springs. Every time his stage went through the gorgeous green valley, he yearned to move from the desert of Willow Springs. So one day he put his wife and day old baby, Ed Jr., on a horse and they rode the fifty miles to Elizabeth Lake.

Now, if a horse couldn't go fifty miles in a day, it was considered "no darn good", and they would cut off his left ear and boot him out into the forest. But it was all right to put his wife and day-old baby on a horse for a fifty mile ride!

Uncle Arnold never elaborated on the fact that Grandaddy John Munz was the Postmaster at Elizabeth Lake. He also was the Tax Assessor. He had a Shetland Pony, and with his little cart would go all over the country, assessing. While he was at it he would treat them to a few snorts of his home-made wine, of which he always had a few gallons tucked away in his cart. It was a long journey, you know, and he needed fortifying. Well, when he thought his hosts were fortified enough he would say, "Oh, I almost forgot - I must collect the "Pole Tax", which was being enforced in those days. After accepting his treat of the wine, they didn't have the heart to not give him his two bucks.

He also was quite a poet. The following example was written about R.P. Shea, who built the castle near Elizabeth Lake:

Again are today quite a few
Assembled to a Barbecue,
Invited by our brother Shea,
Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!!!

I know not whether you've not
Already seen the chosen spot
Where built our host a house so fine
-Just like the castles on the Rhine,
With granite walls which look to me,
Made built for all eternity;
With towers, that in proud grandeur,
Majestic mount into the air;
With all artificial device,
In the whole stately edifice,
Where see we all what they can do:
Skill, labor, patience - and the dough,
For sure, he lets the dollar fly.
Our noble host, with joy say I,
That he's - thanks God, not like the man
Who looks and looks at him again,
And turns and turns him, folks, with woe
Ere - God Almighty! - lets him go.

And now, dear girls and boys, what more
Shall tell I you yet here, before
I quit and shout: Hurrah! Hurrah!!
Three cheers to Mr. and Mrs. Shea!!!

You've seen or you are going to see
That there a large sized lake will be,
That will the country greatly boom,
And, make the lonely desert bloom.
You've seen or you will see the dam,
So solid built that hardly can,
How turbulent behind the lake,
Its giant walls be hurt or brake,
How immense, terrible the flood,
Destroy and wash away it not.

And now, dear folks, dear people, when
Follows this dry spell, rain again,
Then we shall see how soon will make
This dammed up land and handsome lake,
And I would like to see then, where
Were lovelier to live, than there:

Men of great wealth will certain come,
And build themselves a mountain home
And people ready to retreat
May choose it for their permanent seat;
Men, women, wore all out and down,
From strife and struggle in the town,
Will many of them come each year,
To breathe our healthful mountain air,
To drink the water from our springs,
That new life in their spirit brings.

Soon will the work be all complete,
Conducted by our genious Tait
And may be set down upon the crown
That water then come roaring down,
And fill the lake up to the brim,
And fish and fowl soon swim therein;

Be there the proud, the stately swan,
The duck, the goose, the pelican,
And may we have on them our fun
If hunters we - without a gun!

A few words more wish I to say,
Dear people here, to you today.
See all these cars, I, at our door,
Think I - broke down - my friends all know,
Now twenty seven years ago,
Came to this place, which more or less,
At that time was a wilderness.
Came then a team down on the road
(Call it a road, deserved it not)
Astonished down we pointed all;
"There's somebody coming," cried we all,
And we laughed, "Sure, those people must,
Oh, Jimminie, they must be lost!"

And folks, dear folks, dear people, how,
How great a difference is it now!
Some Sundays when 'tis bright and clear,
Seems the whole world to come up here.
From early morn till evening,
Is on our road a constant string
Of cars, that come and go all down,
One mile from here, where a new town
Springs up at Lake Hughes' pretty shore,
And people come still more and more,
And there's the rush as big as - yes,
On Broadway of Los Angeles;
And will the same be, perhaps more,
On future Shea Lake's lovely shore.

Now, girls and boys, has come the time
Where wish I, that with me you join:
Our noble host and Mrs. Shea,
Long shall they live! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!!
(repeat)
Our noble host and Mrs. Shea,
Long shall they live! Hurrah!! Hurrah!!!

... John Munz, in his own hand.

The foreman of that job, a Mr. Tait, came to my mother, Gertrude Williams, and asked her if she would room and board ten men for eight months. She ended up boarding them for eighteen months.

I was just a little girl, but how well I remember that crew. One guy would get drunk and fall down the 17 stairs. Another man threw his pal's clothes out the window in the snow for a prank. Mother made the foreman fire and get rid of him every time one got drunk. The building of that Scottish Castle was the most outstanding thing that ever happened in that part of the country.

R. P. Shea walked to the ranch in a blinding snow storm one night. His car had slipped off the road. He was about froze. After Daddy thawed him out with some of his Dad's (John Munz"s) good wine, he then returned to the Shea car (with a tractor) to pull it and Mrs. Shea into the ranch, where they stayed for several days before they could get out. So, they got pretty well acquainted during that time they were snowed in together. R. P. Shea said he'd had a dream in 1906 - to build this Scottish Castle - and so in 1920 he realized his dream,

by hiring anybody he could find to do the work. Several $50,000 paintings were in our home at Munz Ranch waiting for the castle to get finished, as well as $50,000 rugs, expensive lamps and all sorts of things - while at the same time a bunch of guys were building a $50,000 fence around the castle, which even had a moat, plus an enormous barn full of thorobred horses. There are a number of bedrooms - all different - the green room, the gold room, the blue room - and I mean everything in these rooms was that color. The tower off the living room was papered with Confederate money and it looks very real. There is also a spiral staircase that winds above the pipe organ and goes clear up to the roof.

When the castle was completed Mr. Shea had an enormous Barbecue inviting everyone to celebrate. The poem was written in 1925 before the castle was finished.

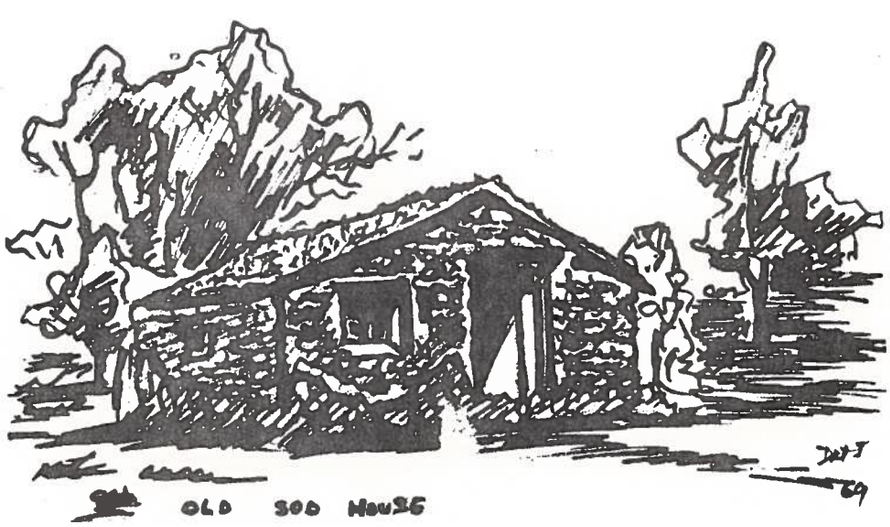
Later Mrs. Shea missed her Beverly Hills society so she returned. Soon after he divorced her and married his secretary. About six months later she decided she didn't like the country life either and she jumped off the Santa Monica pier and ended it all. This shook up Mr. Shea so bad that about six months later he repeated the pier deal with her ashes tied around his waist. A sad ending to a pretty place.

The water never quite panned out, so the moat remains dry. All the creditors got the paintings and rugs and horses. After R. P. Shea, Tommy Lee of K.H.J. owned the castle for a while, and he also came to an untimely end. There have been several new owners, of which the last one is the best. It is now owned by a private citizen and his family.

We are now living in Frazier Park. My father, Elias Munz, and mother, Gertrude L. Williams Munz, passed away since we came up here in 1964.

Respectfully,

Phyllis Munz Damann



To: Shelton and Viola Gordon
From: Holly G. Painter, 703 Woodgate St., Lancaster, CA 93534

I have just finished reading your add-a-leaf book on Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of South Antelope Valley.

I came to Quartz Hill in late 1944 and was joined by my brothers-in-law, Fred and Walter Heydorn and families in 1945 (June).

I am Holly G. Painter and now live at 703 Woodgate in Lancaster. Like most of us citizens, we are from some place else in the U.S. I actually came to California in 1938 to the National Legion Convention, liked what I saw, and was back in several months to live in Huntington Park and South Gate.

During the war, while working for L.Z. Brown Plumbing in the Los Angeles ship yard, I pulled a double hernia and was laid up for several months and told never to go back to my trade. While recuperating and spending a few afternoons at the Elks Club and the Legion Hall, I heard rumors of the future of Muroc Air Base, Lancaster, etc., and it came from a realtor in the crowd. He said, "If you boys can come up with enough gas tickets for a bus load to Lancaster, I will show you what I mean." I was a passenger on that trip. We looked at land on the east side, mainly what will be the future of the New International Airport.

While in Lancaster, I met another ex-realtor who told me he had some better buys he would like to show me if I could get back to Lancaster soon. This I did, and in purchasing 240 acres of wheat on the corner of 50th St. and M between L and M streets, I became a citizen of Quartz Hill.

There being a war on, things were hard to get; papers to sign and permits by the dozen. I purchased the lumber from a warehouse being torn down in Los Angeles and contacted a hay grower in Lancaster to haul the lumber on his return from delivering hay in Los Angeles. He delivered it to the Milton Foder Almond Orchard on M-8 where I had a trailer, and also close to Lonzo Bell who was also a realtor. In talking to him I found out I had been taken again. Paid $50.00 an acre and he had it on his books for $30.00 an acre.

Being a steam fitter and plumber, I wanted once in my life to build a house by myself, so I cut out the lumber at Foder's and took it to the lot I chose to build on to put up. That was the second house in a mile square between 50th - 60th and L - M. George Lane's house on the corner of L and 60th was the other house. I did all the wood work, lathing and roofing. Two brothers who lived on M St. poured the concrete slab and plastered it; an electrician in Lancaster wired it ; and Thompson Cabinet Shop built my windows and doors. This all occurred at 42037 N. 50th St. W. where the Quartz Hill Texaco Station now stands.

My brothers in law joined me in June, 1945, and we built a duplex next to the gas station. House number three in the wheat field. I was not allowed to drill a well for two years, so rented a 1" line from Quartz Hill Water Co. until such time as I could complete my water system. The post office was the next building in the wheat field.

One day while working on my place, I looked east and saw a large column of smoke, a house on fire. So I threw several garden hoses into my car and took off. We fought the fire for quite some time with garden hoses from this house and the neighbors. Finally the fire truck came. That evening at the Dude Ranch on the Hill (Joe Levine's) I inquired where the fire truck came from, and they said Pine Canyon, Hughes Lake. Several of us natives had had

previous volunteer fire department experience, so this led to parties, fund raisings, collections, etc., until finally we purchased a second hand truck in Los Angeles, brought it to Quartz Hill, and put a 500 gallon water tank on it with the aid of a few welders in the neighborhood. We purchased hose and stored it in Manley Frazier's barn. Lonzo Bell and Frazier donated a lot on L-13, and a fire house was built. If I remember right, the first fire department men were Joe Pinheiro, Manley Frazier, George Beckley, Mr. Wrigley, Ralph Clarkson, Mel Myers, Jim Gowdy, Ed Stapleton and Holly Painter. Pinheiro is the only one left on the present fire department. Mr. John Mays was the chief collector and treasurer.

There were two grocery stores, two gas stations, two night spots, and a women's apparel store. The Silver Saddle, a night spot, was moved to the corner of L and Sierra Highway by Sonia and Bill in 1946 or 47.

While in the process of building and engineering the 40 acres on the corner of M and 50th St., the county passed a law that all streets had to be paved, and have curb and gutters. My well came in one mile from our homes at the corner of 55th and L, with a two hundred foot dry well about L-10 or 12 and 52nd or 53rd Street. This put us in financial difficulties, and no bank would lend on what they called cactus land. We contacted Mr. Pen Fillips in Azusa, and he agreed to take over and develop the land for us.

There were several prominent artists in the neighborhood also: Mrs. Jane Pinheiro, who later came to fame with her desert fauna paintings, and Mrs. Blanche Eastman, who did silk screen and oil paintings for several stores in Los Angeles. Another prominent artist in Lancaster was Mrs. Gus Kennepohl. The Allied Arts Association was in its infancy at that time, but they did have showings at the Fair Grounds during the Fair, and met at the Jane Reynolds Building in Lancaster where they held their annual ball.

I had built my house 200' back from the street in hopes of some day putting a store on the front. In 1955 I sold my place to a gasoline company, and the Quartz Hill Texaco Station was put up on the front, and I moved into Lancaster.

Also when I came here, America was training English aviators at the corner of 60th and I, (Mira Loma) and on the corner of I and 10th St. West were two tin sheds. A citizen had an air strip set up there with a 3 block runway between 10th and 14th St. on the north side.

In 1946 I went back to plumbing with Herb Moise Plumbing in Lancaster and put the first indoor facilities in a tin building at Muroc Air Base. I saw some of the first flights of the Black Widow being performed.

One can still see the remains of my patio and the fireplace on the north east corner of the service station lot from the new parking lot in front of the new and remodeled grocery and market on the corner of 50th and M.

First there was a galvanized building on this corner, and then Jim Martin bought it and erected a grocery store in its stead. I made several passes at Lancaster before settling here. I passed through in '38 and stopped long enough to eat a hamburger and drink a cup of coffee. Next in 1939 when the Elks Lodge was instituted here. I came up from Los Angeles with a trainload of Elks from L.A., Burbank, Glendale, Huntington Park, etc. There happened to be a 40 mile wind blowing and the two tents in the fair ground were ready to take off, so a number of us came back to Lancaster to Joe Levine's place, a brother Elk, and stayed there until train time. Levine's Place finally was purchased by Alec _____, who was later burned to death in an auto accident near Quartz Hill.

The third time was in 1944 when I came with the salesman, and then moved to Quartz Hill. Lancaster at that time was just really starting to expand. It was not much more than several blocks square, and the rest of the land was mainly alfalfa fields.

Holly G. Painter

DR. ROBERT C. ST. CLAIR
OPTOMETRIST
38433 NORTH 20TH ST. EAST
PALMDALE, CALIF.

TELEPHONE 947-2337

The Hughes Ranch of Pearblossom

Before my mother and father bought property and built our home in Pearblossom, we lived in a number of places in the Pearblossom, Llano area. At one time we lived at the Hughes Ranch in Pearblossom. The ranch was developed shortly after World War I and entailed digging a ditch with Coolie labor to bring Big Rock Creek water some 3 miles to the ranch.

Mrs. Hughes was originally of the royal Hapsburg family of Austria who lost her title (whatever it was) by marrying a common American. Her dowrie, however, constructed a large ranch of some 250-300 acres of pear trees.

The main house was constructed of stone, by craftsman brought from Italy. The floor was of hardwood - narrow strips laid in a hexagonal pattern. A double fireplace was located between the dining and living rooms and a Delco generating plant supplied electric lighting. Remember, all of this in the early and mid-twenties. The house is still being lived in, and can be seen on the west side of Long View Road about 3/4 mile south of Highway 138. The Nauman residence to the south and the Cramer home (all stonework) are part of the original complex.

With a successful, productive operation in the late twenties, disaster struck with the deaths of first Mr. Hughes and within months, Mrs. Hughes. There were two boys, half-brothers, Mr. Hughes having been married previously. The two sons fought over the estate, tied up the operating funds, and eventually both lost the entire estate.

We lived there as caretakers for a time, and lived in the old stables. Not as grim as it sounds, they too were made of stone, and with the advent of the automobile, had been converted into very comfortable living quarters.

During its successful operation, the west side of Long View Road, bordering the ranch, had an ornamental twist wire fence that was completely obscured by red rose bushes. Parts of the fence are still there, but the roses are long gone, as are most of the pear trees.

I remember particularly the dining room furniture of the "big" house. The legs of the table and the chairs were hand-carved elephant trunks, curving to the floor, with the heads supporting the table top and the chair seats. The backs of the chairs and the sides of the table were carved grape leaves and vines. The elephants even had authentic ivory tusks. The wood was very dark, almost black, and highly polished. I was only ten at the time and was obviously impressed by those elephants. I've often wondered if they are still there.

THE GARLAND LACY STORY

with Interesting Sidelights about Raleigh Galbrith

May 1, 1973

To start with, I came to this Valley in 1943. I was 24 years old, and came here for my health, as I had asthma in Redondo Beach. The asthma went away after a couple of years.

I got a job at Polaris Flight School as a mechanic and preflighter, quite a letdown, as I previously received $1.30 an hour, and then received sixty cents an hour. As time went on, I worked up to airplane electric trouble shooting. I stayed on there until the last month of the war, then started looking for a permanent peace job, which my supervisor at Polaris helped me to go into the garage business (called H & L Garage in Lancaster.) As he used to run a Packard agency before he became a supervisor, we started the business. After I learned the trade, I finally bought Pappy Hinch out. That is about the time I met Raleigh Galbrith.

He was the only Highway Patrolman up here in the Valley. If there were any accidents in the Valley, or any injury, he had to check them out regardless of what time of day or night. Sometimes he would go 24 hours before a break. He used to have to escort all the airplanes up from Newhall up the Old Mint Canyon Highway. If he escorted airplanes up in the daytime, he still had to get up at night for wrecks.

The first encounter I had with him was when I was testing a Model A roadster. The steering wheel came off, and I turned over three times (so Raleigh said). Anyhow, when I woke up eight hours later in the hospital, there was this big cop standing there asking how it happened. I suffered from amnesia, and so all the details prior to the accident were unclear. I couldn't even remember whether or not I had a brother living in Palmdale. At first, he didn't believe me, but as time went on, my memory slowly came back. At the hospital they told me I had a bad concussion and told me not to go back to work for a year. But, just starting a business with all the payments, I started to work the next day.

A couple of days later, Raleigh came by and asked me to work on his patrol car (a Chrysler Straight 8), which I did. There was more red tape and book-work for the bill than doing the job. Anyhow, he liked the way I worked (like him, 24 hours a day.) About this time, he had a vacant garage in Palmdale, and he asked if I would be interested in taking over his garage for fifty dollars a month, which I accepted.

The place where I was before, my landlord told me that everyone that went into business in Palmdale went broke, and that all the car agencies that started in Palmdale ended up in Lancaster. I took my chances, and he was right. The fall was the best time of year because of all the hunters and fishermen. That was in 1945, and most of the old cars had gone through the war and were worn out. The trip from L.A. to Bishop would break down a lot of cars and was quite a strain, and we seemed to be located centrally. I made a tow truck out of a '29 Cadillac, which really pulled in the cars. But, after Christmas, every-thing changed. Everything shut...nothing to do.

Raleigh talked me into towing in wrecks and doing highway patrol wrecks, which I accepted, but we still had lots of time on our hands. So, Raleigh used to come to the garage and practice his shooting (he was a perfect shot, and he practiced all the time). He wanted competition, so he traded me with a pair of matched S & W Pistols (1 - K 22 & 1 - R - 38), and he taught me how to use them. The strangest thing: R.G. had a tunnel from his house, went across the street, and into another house across the street. He used to split a playing card with his 38 wad cutter and he would have me throw it in the air

and he would keep shooting at it until his gun was empty. We would ride in the patrol car at night all over the country and I finally became his helper. Later, we used to hunt deer in the hills south of Palmdale, and we used a 41 coupe with over-sized tires. We even used to run all over the roads, even Beacon Peak.

R.G. had at least 200 guns, rifles, and shotguns. With long target scopes he could knock off a deer at 500 yards in the head or neck (that was before the magnum guns, but they did a good job). He would never shoot a jack rabbit in the body, always in the head. Anyway, after the first winter it was tough going. I was engaged to be married to Nelda Harvey, and I sold my car for $300.00 to buy a wedding and engagement ring. So about April, when things started picking up, I put together a car. We got all the gas ration stamps I could get and with another couple, off to Las Vegas we went to get married. On the way home, we ran out of stamps at Barstow and we had to make it back to Palmdale through Edwards on two and a half gallons of gas. I drove about 15 miles per hour in high gear and averaged 35 miles to the gallon.

As time went on, I took on a partner - my brother. He had lived in Palmdale several years and knew everyone there, so we went into a local trade. We made a huge success (after we learned how to get along together). In fact our gross was third largest in Palmdale at that time, until larger businesses and stores went in in 1946 and 1947. We bought some land where the Palm Theatre is now. The man that owned it had 1 1/4 acres and his house was on the 1/4 portion. But when he found out we wanted it for a business, he decided he didn't want a business by his house.

Within a few years, the land had almost doubled in value per acre. But we did make some money buying and selling land. I bought an airplane and learned how to fly it, and I kept it in the Palmdale Hangar at the big airport. About that time or shortly thereafter, the United States Government gave the whole airport to the Water District. Previously, that airport had the best runways anywhere.

I was asked to be a member of the Chamber of Commerce, as I knew something about airplanes, and they could use my advice. After we had the airport and all the property, we were trying to figure out what to do with it. At that time, there were about ten of us who were active members on the Chamber of Commerce. We would always vote Mel Courson as president. He had more money than all of us put together. Money talks, and he had a good business. Anyhow, we decided to write to North American and several factories about final assembly and test flying, as we had the perfect place for it. Lockheed announced a letter and sent a representative to see us. They agreed that we had the perfect place for an airport. At that time, the water district didn't have enough money to get and keep their business going, so they sold their land to pay up.

Anyhow, part of the time I kept my plane at R.G.'s airport, which was from 6th Street East to Palmdale Blvd. to Avenue Q to 10th Street West. When I would get bored at the Garage I would walk about 300 ft. to my plane and I would fly around the country. I used to like to do stunts. I never could get R.G. to fly with me. He hit the scales at 250, and I think he figured my plane was too light to hold him and myself both. When the wind would come up I used his hangar. We would have to make our glide pattern over Palmdale and the last glide before touchdown was 300 ft. over the old post office which was one block south of Palmdale Boulevard on Sierra Highway. I remember one time someone turned me in to the CAA for flying too low over a town. Thinking about it, the runway that we used back then sure would be awfully small for the planes today. Besides, if the wind changed, you had to use the same runway, just have different types of landing.

As I remember, one evening there was a fire at McBrides Hardware and we lost half of our town.

In about 1954 I bought 20 acres of land at 90th Street East and Palmdale Boulevard, of which was built the largest wrecking yard in L.A. County.

R.G. would never come out and see me any more after I bought the wrecking yard in Littlerock. I guess he didn't favor the idea of me leaving his place, although my partner stayed in town. The next time I saw him he had bought a new 300 Magnum Winchester and the firing chamber blew up and almost blew off his right hand. I don't think I ever saw him so mad. He threatened he was going to sue them for $500,000. He never was very active after that.

All these past years, the Antelope Valley has been very good to me. I have found a wife and have raised my family here. I have had the best of luck in my business and best of all, my health has been restored to me...

Garland Lacy

Old Palmdale Cemetery: Historical; Neglected

By Mrs. Monnie D. Bunch

I repeat from a lecture I heard given by Elias Munz, and conversations with William (Bill) Ritter:

In 1884 a group of German and Swiss people bought and settled on land in the area of 27th St. East and Ave. R south to Ave. S. There were between 60-70 families. They built nice homes, some two-storied and with basements. The Lutherans founded a church and set aside 20 acres for the cemetery. And, they named their new location "Palmenthan" (Palmtree).

They also surveyed and built the first canal from Little Rock Creek to their village (much of which is used by the present canal). When summer came their water failed; then, with barrels, they hauled water from an artisian source now known as Barrel Springs.

When they learned they had been tricked and their deeds were no good, all they could do was go elsewhere. Their deserted homes were mostly carried away piece by piece, by those who needed a board.

Some of the buildings were moved near the tracks to serve as homes for railroad workers and some business places, and the "new" town was named Palmdale.

I am interested in this little unkept cemetery. I have a son there who gave his life for his country in retaking of the Philippines. After going through Pearl Harbor and "island hopping" all the way through to the landing at Luzone. Also, my husband and a lot of friends are there.

I understand there are a number of people anxious to give a generous donation for a chain link fence to three sides of this cemetery. I, myself, will give generously for it. I have contacted some fencing builders and will have their reports on costs for the fence this Memorial Day Sunday. I hope to meet all interested persons at the old cemetery following the 2 p.m. ceremony. I hope it will be all the people of Palmdale, as this neglected cemetery is a DISGRACE to the history and the town.

In about 1967 or 1968 a group worked diligently to get this old cemetery's care taken over by the Los Angeles County, but all hopes failed. Now it is up to "We, the People", and we might as well face it.

February 3, 1972

Story By Ruth Elliot Kinsman

J. Shelton Gordon
Palmdale, Calif.

Dear Mr. Gordon:

When I wrote to you last December, thanking you for the wonderful collection of pioneer stories, I said I would send you the story of my mother's family, the Martins in Littlerock. I am enclosing the script for it.

In going through my mother's papers, I found two clippings that I thought might interest you, so I took them to have them Zeroxed. It apparently was cut from a magazine, as it was on slick paper, but there was no identificiation. I know it had to be over fifty years ago. The other was taken from the Los Angeles Express in August, 1919. It had pictures of the pear trees loaded with fruit, but age had deteriorated it so much the picture didn't come out. The script is not good enough for reproduction, but I am enclosing it for you to read. If you care to use all, any part, or none of it, you are welcome to do so.

May you have continued success with your project. It is a worthwhile undertaking and will give enjoyment and information to many people. Thank you again for my copy of your first edition. We have read it with interest.

Sincerely,

Mrs. F. M. Kinsman
2803 Moss Avenue
Los Angeles, CA 90065

THREE GENERATIONS OF MARTINS IN THE OLD ROCK HOUSE

By Ruth Elliott Kinsman

My maternal grandparents, Amasa and Eleanor Martin, arrived in Antelope Valley in 1890. With them were their four children, Everett, 15, Bessie, 13, Ada, 11 and Harry, 8.

The Martins had emigrated two years before to Santa Ana, California, from Martinville, Province of Quebec, Canada. The Martin family were New Englanders but had settled during the early eighteen hundreds in the northern part of New Hampshire. The village which was named for the family was found to be just over the line into Canada when the International Boundary Line was surveyed in 1840.

Grandpa Martin had worked around Santa Ana and Tustin doing carpenter work but the building boom died by 1890 and what he really wanted was land. He heard of homesteads to be had in Antelope Valley and immediately filed on one. He loaded his household goods on his and a neighbor's wagons, put a crate of chickens on top, tied the cow on behind and started for Antelope Valley. He took the boys with him but sent Grandma and the two girls ahead by train. They spent four days with Dr. Peckham's family at Alpine Springs, now called Harold, waiting for the wagons to struggle up through Soledad Canyon.

The homestead turned out to be barren desert three miles north of Llano which was then a Quaker colony. The irrigation ditch from Big Rock Creek ran past their land but by the time it reached the Martin homestead, the quantity and quality left much to be desired. These people from the land of rain and rivers were to learn water was more precious than gold.

Grandpa quickly built a sixteen by twenty, two-story house, then set to work to clear land and plant a crop. The children helped what they could but they were walking the three miles to the Quaker colony to attend school.

In the spring, the green shoots of Grandpa's crop began to appear, then quickly disappeared. The chipmunks and rabbits were having a feast. Grandpa's funds were nearly gone and he went to work for some of the Big Rock ranchers. Then he heard that the Alpine Land and Water Company, who were developing Littlerock, needed help. He made a deal with them to take half of his pay in land.

His land was the north twenty of the eighty acre section north of the Palmdale road and what is now 77th Street East. He soon had built a California house, a barn and a blacksmith shop where he did blacksmithing for the people of the area.

The land company was planting almond and prune trees on the cleared land, but Grandpa planted Bartlett pears for his main orchard. He was the first to plant the pears which were later to make Littlerock famous. He was often called the Father of the Pear Industry. Grandpa won a number of medals with his fruit, one in the Jamestown Exposition in 1907.

In the fall of 1907, Grandpa sold his original twenty acres and bought the forty acres at the south end of the same section and adjoining the Palmdale road. This included the big rock house which has become a landmark.

This house was built in 1894 by the land company. It was called the Palmer House and was to accommodate the Mid-Western land buyers who came to see their land. Some looked and left. Others stayed until they could get a house built and cultivate their land.

The house was built of river rock, hewn to make flat sides. This rock made the walls for the downstairs twenty-two inches thick. The upstairs was covered with siding. There were nine extra large rooms with plastered walls and polished redwood woodwork. One special feature was the upstairs bathroom complete with porcelain tub, washbowl and toilet. However, until after the Littlerock Dam was built the water pressure from the ditch was so low the room was of little use.

By now only Everett remained at home to help Grandpa on the ranch. He also had a hired man, Jim Jackson, who had been with Grandpa so long he was like a member of the family.

Ada married Leroy Elliott whom she had met while the Elliott family lived in Almondale. They were the parents of myself and my brother Bryce. When Almondale had dried up and blown away, figuratively speaking, the families there scattered. My paternal grandparents moved to Compton. When the town of Almondale came to life again, it was renamed Pearblossom.

Bessie married William Ellis and they lived in and around Littlerock, raising a family of four children, Edna, Warren, Edith and Kenneth. Bessie died in 1920.

Harry married Blanche Shea who had also lived at Almondale and had moved from there to Covina. They had two children, Harry Junior and Lucille. Harry became an engineer on the Santa Fe Railroad. He died in Barstow in 1935.

In 1913 Everett married Edith Dearborn of Los Angeles. They had three children. Eleanor is married to Murray Mitchell and lives in Chehalis, Washington. Alice is married to Randolph Renaud. They live in Honolulu, Hawaii. George and his wife Audrey make their home in Quartz Hill.

After Grandpa bought the new place, he set out pear trees, built a blacksmith shop on the upper corner of the place and proceeded to develop a profitable ranch.

I have many happy memories of the summers we spent at the ranch. It was a real treat for city children. When I was a teenager I was allowed to pack pears along with the women of the area. I used to wonder how Grandpa knew just the right moment to pick those green pears so that they would ripen perfectly. When it was about time, each morning he would bring one in, cut it, look at it, feel it and taste it. There would be days he would shake his head, then came the day when he would nod and everyone would spring into action. Work would begin and what a busy time for everyone until the crop was safely picked, packed and shipped to the city market.

Grandpa was fifty-one when he came to Antelope Valley in 1890. By 1920 he was an old man and he depended more and more on his son Everett. Grandma died this year and from then on Grandpa spent most of his time with my parents in Los Angeles.

Being in the immediate area adjoining Littlerock Creek, the community had first water rights. The water was taken into a main ditch, zanja, the Mexicans called it, and distributed from that to various ranches according to their acreage. Everett acted as "zanjero" for many years, seeing that each ranch received the exact hours of water to which he was entitled and that none of the precious fluid was wasted.

After Grandpa's death in 1926 Everett inherited the ranch on which the rock house stood. He became well known in the civic affairs of the community. He served on the board of trustees of the Keppel Union School, and later on the board for A.V.U.H.S. During World War II he served on the local draft board. Perhaps he was best known for his job of many years as county deputy assessor throughout the valley.

Everett was also active in the grange and the Old Timers barbecue picnics held in the park in Lancaster during the thirties. I had the pleasure of accompanying my father and mother to several of these picnics. The Old Timers gathered early so they would have time to visit with their old friends. They came from far and near, even some who had moved out of the valley.

Mr. Duntly would be watching the tub of beans simmering over the campfire. The tantalizing aroma of the spicy beans whetted the already healthy appetites. Mr. Duntly furnished the beef from his Willow Springs cattle ranch. The committee gathered the night before at the hotel to get the beef ready for cooking in the pit. It was cut into four or five pound chunks, seasoned and put into flour sacks which were then put into gunny sacks. Meanwhile, some of the men would be digging the pit, approximately six by six and six feet deep. A hot oak fire would be built in it. When it had died down to coals, rocks were heated in the bottom of the pit, then the sacks of meat were put on the hot rocks and the dirt piled back on them. About half an hour before noon the men would begin shoveling the dirt from the pit. As each sack was reached the dirt was shaken off, the gunny sack emptied, and then the meat dumped into huge pans. The beans were ready and together with huge bowls of potato salad the women had made under the supervision of Mrs. Weber, the feast was ready.

Afterwards, everyone settled down to enjoy the program. There was always music, the high school band and local talent. The speaker would be some prominent local citizen. The program would be interspersed with humor and reminiscence. By mid afternoon, those living farthest away began leaving. At home there were cows to milk and feed, the eggs to gather and the hens to feed. Hopefully another year would see them back. These gatherings were discontinued during World War II, and so far as I know, never resumed.

In July 1963 the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors voted to set aside ten acres at the corner of Avenue U and 87th Street East for park and recreation purposes. This park was named in honor of Everett W. Martin in recognition of his many years devoted to his community.

After Everett's death in 1956 his son George ran the ranch for some years, then sold and moved to Quartz Hill.

Letter from Mrs. Esther Luzetta Damann
To Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
Re: Second Edition of "Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters and Reminiscences of Some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers"

March - April, 1972

Dear Mr. Shelton Gordon:

My name is Esther Luzetta Damann, called "Zetta" all my life. I am 85 now. My birthday is August 19, 1886. My husband, Julius Carl Damann, passed away November 19, 1959. When he came to Antelope Valley in 1908 he lived on Leon Vicett's place.

I came up to visit my sister, Bertha Hopkins, who was teaching at the Del Sur school. She boarded at Fred and Lulu Price's. He was the constable. She was cooking for the construction crew on the North Portal Aqueduct.

Jay Damann's sister, Elizabeth, invited Bertha and I for the weekend. Jay already had an automobile, the first one in the area in 1912. I think it was a "G.M." - Jay's sisters, Elizabeth and Johanna, better known as "Jo", were good chaperones. We were snowed in that weekend and didn't get back to Del Sur until Wednesday.

In 1913 the "Fence Law" went into effect, and Jay and Rawley Duntley and a fellow named Butterfield(-worth?) rounded up their cattle which were grazing anywhere from Elizabeth Lake to Mojave. Rawley and Butterworth took his to Willow Springs and Jay took his to the Vicett place at Elizabeth Lake.

We were married in 1914 in "TROPICO", now called GLENDALE. Lived one year more at Elizabeth Lake before moving to Porterville.

Leon Vicett died soon after Jay arrived in 1906 - so then he leased the 1200 acre Mountain Meadow Ranch from Vicett's sisters in France. Judge Dillon got the cattle brand "Circle V". We still have the branding iron in the family for sixty-six years. This was his last round-up in Antelope Valley.

We went to one dance in Lancaster to a Spring Festival before we were married. Jay's sisters were too religious to go dancing, so he took them home while I waited at the Western Hotel. The only other recreation was card parties in our neighbors' homes. Mrs. Gertrude Munz, Eli's wife, had lots of card parties.

The Augustine Ranch was part of the Vicett place, and Jay's sisters, Elizabeth and Jo,took the hired men hot lunches three times a day with the horse and buggy.

Besides having the range cattle, we milked 30 cows a day. The cream was taken to Lancaster about three times a week and put on the train for Los Angeles. We raised barley and wheat, as this was during the wet years. Lots of times it was stored in warehouses in Lancaster until the price was right.

Jay's best friend was Eli Munz. They had many good times together.

Respectfully,

Zetta Damann

Zetta Damann

THE ALICE JARRETT STORY

Pearblossom

May 9, 1973

Dear Shelton,

In lieu of having to drop my son, then aged 8, out in the desert alone because he was afraid he would be a sissy being raised by a lady alone, we found ourselves up at the Devil's Punch Bowl. Our map had been given us on a 2 inch piece of paper and was very incomplete. It is only 68 miles from South Pasadena, but we had traveled over 100 before we found the old Ranch that belonged to Jack and Connie Burnham. Some real climbing and roaming over the large rocks and not being able to find the cabin made him realize rather speedily that he had toughened very quickly. We loved the area and were invited out again to visit the Burnhams, at which time Jack, who was a Realtor, talked to me about the area and I announced to him that I would spend as much as $800.00 for a piece of land and a small house. Really a big spender....not blinking an eye, he went ahead showing me land that was then $200.00 and acre and the parcel was 40 acres, but he did not tell me the price. I asked to be called when he had a piece higher up the mountain toward the South. This is how it all started, and needless to say, I didn't get the land and a house for $800.00.

The old gentleman who owned the land, that is now where the Devil's Punch Bowl Park as well as my house is located, was a delightful and colorful old character. Helen MacGregor, who raised two boys while living in the little house, now Park Ranger's house, tells of this old gentleman, Ben Miller, inviting her into his one room rock house. She states it was a picture she will never forget - Ben cooking on an old wood stove stirring two pots with both hands, one pot for the hound (he would slip him a bit now and then) and the other for himself. He constantly chewed a cigar and the gentle, kind blue eyes depicted a kind and cheerful heart. Old Ben tried everything from cattle to fruit trees, but the land was just not gentle enough to be moulded into production. In the early fifties, after a big snow, some friends got stuck at the gate about 3/4 of a mile down the hill, and friendly Ben walked down to help and soon passed away with a heart attack. The mountain misses him.

I never dreamed I would get to live in this great Valley, wondering how I would make a living. Several years passed using the spot for week-end unwindings, and then I met John Budd who suggested we open a Real Estate office in the Valley. When I asked where, and he said Pearblossom, I jumped with joy, because this was "my town" going up to the Punch Bowl. Later, when we had purchased the present office sight here in Pearblossom and were cleaning up the Little Stone House on the Highway, (a land mark for many years), one of the town "characters" stopped by and said hello and announced to us that he and his partners owned the land where the little house stands. Knowing we had really met a Town Character, we kept on being the "hired help" cleaning up. We had many interesting experiences working to over come problems of water and many other things, but it was rewarding to work with such great pioneers as the Joe Stofel Family and other old timers.

It is now 20 years later, and when I look around not much seems to have been accomplished over the years, but I am sure that the next generation will feel that a lot of spade work with lots of love has gone into the community. This is "HOME" and I am always so glad to get back "home" from my tripping.

My very best to all Valleyites,

Alice Jarrett

DR. ROBERT C. ST. CLAIR
OPTOMETRIST
38433 NORTH 20TH ST. EAST
PALMDALE, CALIF.

TELEPHONE 947-2337

Dear Mr. Gordon,

One (of many) old-timer type personalities that merit recording was a lady who lived in the South Valley through the late twenties and the thirties.

Her claim to fame was two-fold. First, she was an honest-to-goodness, bonafide Countess - Countess Jeanie LaMar. Second, she was, at one time, the World Champion Lady Boxer.

My family moved to Antelope Valley in 1932, and we lived in a log cabin (really) on the old Hagenbaugh Ranch south of Llano. The Countess disputed the water-rights of the ranch and declared her intention to acquire what little there was and pipe it to her cabin one-half mile away. Straight up.

Through the water fracas, and many related visits, my parents became well acquainted with her and a very friendly relationship developed. Jeanie, as we knew her, was born in France and in time married an Italian Count, thus acquiring the title Countess. Unhappily, the Count did not long survive, and Jeanie was left a widow. Apparently, this was in the early twenties and with the post-war enthusiasm, lady boxers were in vogue. At any rate, Jeanie got into the act, and after the usual eliminations, fought her way to the World Championship title.

She then moved into the Hollywood swirl and established several health and physical fitness clubs (shades of the present day) and wrote syndicated columns on health and the womanly art of self-defense. This was in the era of Noah Berry's Paradise, the resort hotel on Big Rock Creek. (The hotel burned years ago, but the walls and huge stone fireplace are still there.)

So Jeanie chose to live in our Valley. Her home-site was below Jackson Lake (Big Pines, Angeles Forest) on a mountain ridge overlooking the entire valley. She proudly proclaimed a million-dollar view - but no water, and a mile and one-half walk from the end of the road - all up-hill.

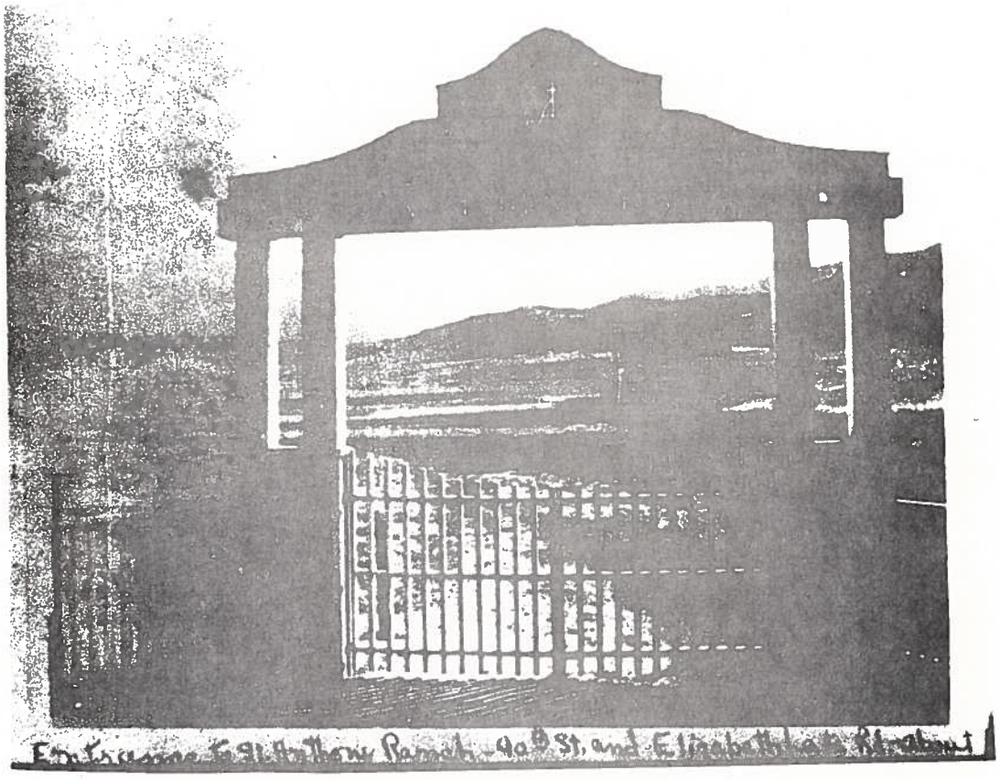
One of her accomplishments while living there was enticing a number of local men, by coaxing them with large quantities of beer, to carry a full-size upright player piano all the way up that mountain to her cabin.

All of the materials for the construction of the cabin, and all of her supplies had to be carried either by back or by pack-horse. Jeanie's fortunes waned through the thirties and she came to an untimely end around 1940. She was struck by a taxi while stepping from a street-car - or vice versa, we never really knew.

She was a flamboyant character and a legend of that end of the Valley. Her cabin still stands, and my family and I have hiked in to see it several times. A million-dollar view, but still no water.

ST. ANTHONY RANCH

By Milton Stark



Traveling west along Elizabeth Lake Road, Leona Valley, between Bouquet Canyon Road and 90th Street, one can look south and see the barns, silo, fields and trees of the St. Anthony Ranch. The houses are hidden among the cottonwoods which are in excess of 100 years old. If one looks carefully, the shed covering the crystal clear spring may be seen on the hillside above the trees. This is said to be one of the oldest ranches in the area.

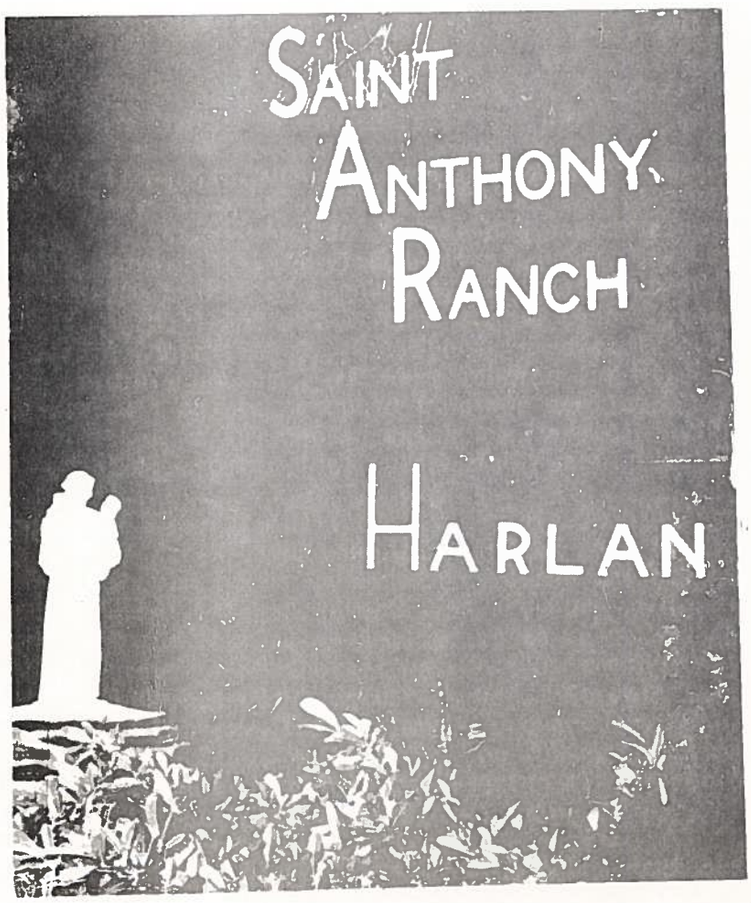
The Katanemuk Tribe of the Shoshone Indians, lived and hunted in the area before the Spanish came. Chico Lopez, the discoverer of gold in Placerita Canyon, is the first known owner of the land, which he used to graze his sheep. Miguel Leonis (pronounced Le-o-nèece) the irascible Basque', next added the property to his already huge holdings (however clouded the title) extending to his adobe in Calabasas. For many years this was known (and can still be seen on some sectional maps) as Leonis Valley. It was during his time that the first construction was done at the ranch. At the time of Leonis' death in 1900, the ranch was composed of a Catholic Church, a two story house, a silo, as well as barns and out buildings. A nephew of Leonis, by the name of Gortino, then acquired the ranch covering some 3300 acres. Apparently Mass was conducted when a Priest could manage to get up this way. Kate Godde Billet says that when she was a girl, the Priest would notify her by postcard that he would be at the Church on a certain date. Kate would go from farm to farm on horseback notifying all the neighbors of this fact, and on the designated Sunday they would come over Godde Pass by horse and wagon to attend Mass.

In 1913 Gortino sold the ranch to F.D. Hall, who was not only not Catholic, but some felt anti-Catholic. He threw the Crucifix and the Virgin Mary out into the barn and converted the Church to other purposes. He changed the name to the F.D. Hall Ranch. This was (or at least so the local Catholics said) the reason

Mr. Hall had so much bad luck in the next 15 years. On the other hand, it could have been because Mr. Hall was a little bit hard to get along with. Once Mr. Sharp (who had homesteaded and developed the Pie Cherry Ranch in the west end of the Valley) and his grandson, Gene Wisherson, went to Palmdale in his wagon by way of Leona Avenue. That evening, when he got back, he found that Mr. Hall had put a fence across Leona Avenue blocking Mr. Sharp off from the Pie Cherry Ranch. Mr. Sharp immediately cut the fence down, went home, secured his shotgun, and went looking for Mr. Hall. Fortunately, he apparently cooled off before he could find the gentleman. One old-timer says that Mr. Hall liked to spy on his neighbors, especially ladies living up on the rim of the Valley who did their gardening wearing less than acceptable amount of clothing.

In 1923, Mr. Hall subdivided his 3300 acres and attempted to sell the land from the Marsh-Strong Building in Los Angeles, for $175 to $350 per acre. Terms required were one-sixth cash and the balance paid over ten years with 7% interest. In an advertising brochure we see for the first time in print, the name of the Valley Anglicized to Leona Valley. Whether Mr. Hall had made this change or whether it was done by common usage of settlers who had moved in since 1900 has not been determined. Streets in the Valley were named Palomis, Bartlett, Cherry, Rose, Almond, Orchard, rather than their present names of 87th, 90th, 92nd, 95th, 98th, and 107th. This brochure appears to be reasonably factual and honest, considering the amount of water available in the Valley at that time.

In the later twenties, Mr. Hall turned the sale of the land over to the Phillips Hambaugh Company. Their brochure made the "hard sell" with statements like "The Land of Unwatered Fruits...where sub-irrigation means recreation in California's healthiest clime - 3300 feet elevation...the Vale of Eternal Spring"! Further, this folder indicated that "a delightful clubhouse...with ample accomodations in a naturally landscaped spot surrounded with luxuriant growth at a high point in the Valley will be maintained at cost for the use of its members"! This clubhouse, drawn in the brochure was actually Mr. Hall's two-story home, which burned to the ground in December, 1942.



In the thirties, the ranch, now shrunk to a mere 110 acres, was acquired by the Ritter brothers and later by Arnold Munz. In the 1940's Mr. and Mrs. Burney Starksen purchased the property, and although not Catholic, felt it important to restore the ranch, as much as possible, to its original state. The St.Anthony name was restored, and a statue of a Priest with a child is at the gate. The Church building was converted into a very comfortable liveable home. Somehow they had acquired a picture of the gate to the ranch as it was in 1901. Mr. Starksen had a branding iron made with a brand like the symbol in the picture, only to have his ranch hand plow up a similar branding iron at a later date.

The present owners, Dr. and Mrs. Fred F. Harlan, bought the ranch in 1967 and have continued to maintain its beauty and to take pride in its history.

THE MOST INTERESTING AND INFORMATIVE STORIES

of

MYRTLE E. BRESLIN

Brought in by Walter Cole, an old family friend

May 15, 1973

I have so many inquiries as to what I do with my time, am I lonesome or afraid?

I have no time to be lonesome. There is a large yard here to be kept up by myself. I am a lover of flowers and trees; a lover of nature never gets lonesome, we are so busy watching all the wonders surrounding us. I have a hobby of hobbies, so usually there is something of special interest that I am very busy finding out what I can about what ever it may be. Just now it is pewter. As a child, my special work around the home was polishing the pewter and the lamp chimneys. I was raised a Quaker, and every child was taught home making, and those were the first steps. A mighty fine idea, I say. So - I learned to love the satin sheen of pewter. No other metal has it. I lost the few peices I had in the fire eleven years ago, so now I am collecting pewter.

Then there are the stamps. I also lost quite a valuable collection in the fire, but there is another collection being put together. I will never be able to get some of those first issues I had in my first collection, but some day I can hand these on to some boy or girl. They are being put in a book - collector style.

Hooked rugs come in for a session every so often, and it is the old style hooking done with a hook and each loop is hooked through. But they will last for years.

Oil painting and water colors also have their place in the year's activities. Taking out to put in the sun some of the glass that is being colored, then bringing it in, to say nothing of having to keep all this stuff clean from dust.

Then there is reading to do. I used to read lots of books, but my favorite magazines are all I get read these days, what with T.V. programs and the general run of house work. Then a few outside activities I seem to fall into every so often.

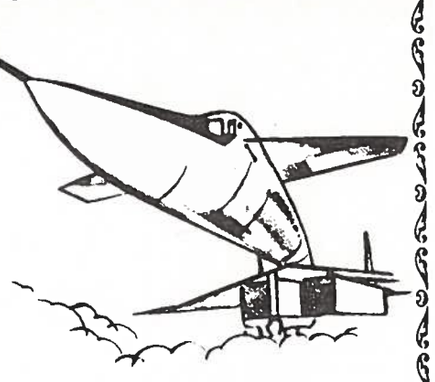
Am I lonesome? No. Am I afraid? No.

This I love to do: Help other people find hobbies. It makes you happy. In time of trouble, nervousness or unrest, lose yourself in a hobby. You will be surprised at how relaxed you become.

I have never been afraid in my life. I was taught that God would take care of us. I still believe just that. I have always been taken care of by an unseen power and I have the faith that I always will be protected. So why be afraid?

These are a few of the activities that go on around this old house during the year.

Editor's Note...

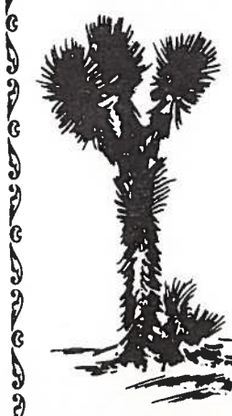


According to archeologists, Antelope Valley is part of a vast coastal plain that existed on earth thousands of years ago and is described as a large depression in this plain of about one-hundred feet below the surface, forty by sixty miles in size.

The story of Antelope Valley since that time has been of continuing progress. Talk to any long-time resident of the Valley, and you sense an intense feeling of pride in the area. Delve into the Valley's history, and you see the reason for this pride.

On subsequent pages, the Pioneer will highlight some of the many people and events that shaped the course of development in Antelope Valley. Space limitations have prohibited a detailed study of the area.

Special thanks must go to Mr. Glen Settle, Director of Goldcamp Museum of Burton's Tropico Gold Mine, Rosamond; Lt. William P. Campbell, Information Officer, Air Force Flight Test Center, Edwards AFB, and the Antelope Valley Press for their kind assistance in putting together this issue.



Editor

SINCE 1925
SAN FERNANDO VALLEY FEDERAL SAVINGS
A LOAN ASSOCIATION

Future envisioned in early days

WARM summer days . . . the sounds of sleek modern aircraft as they penetrate the blue sky above the desert floor . . . the unique Joshua Tree . . . all would be included in a present day description of Antelope Valley.

We have but to look around today's Antelope Valley and see the progress and prosperity that it is experiencing; modern freeways linking it to the heart of Los Angeles and opening new avenues for homes and industry.

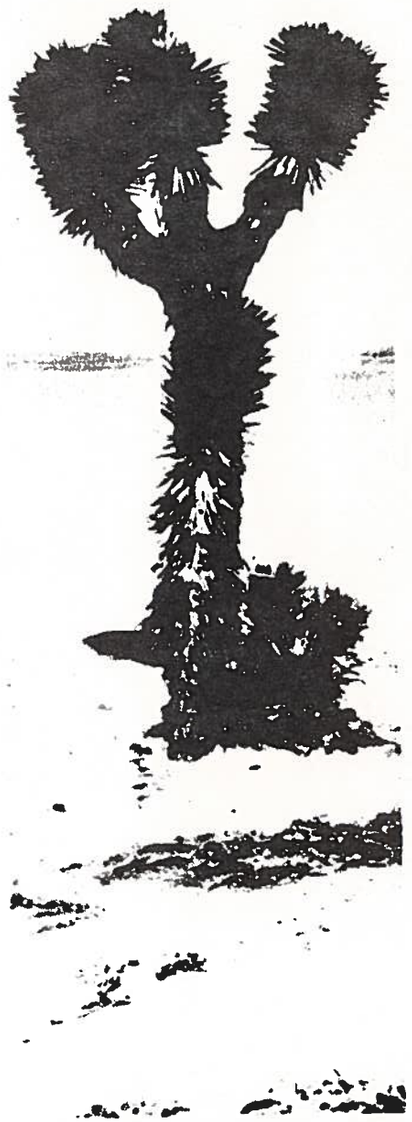
Why the success? That's both easy and hard to explain . . . to understand one has to look back into the past and trace what is regarded now as Antelope Valley history.

EARLY VALLEY PIONEERS

First real pioneers of the Valley were Indian tribes, notably the Piute, who settled in the foothills near Little Rock, Elizabeth Lake, Willow Springs and Lovejoy Springs.

Two prime reasons for these settlements were simple enough: water and an abundance of Antelope.

Legend has it that the first white men to enter the Valley were two deserting Spanish Navy men from the Portola expedition which traveled near the area in 1769. No records exist to tell us the names of the twosome, but it was recorded by Lt. Pedro Fages, who crossed the southern part of the Valley in 1772, that the presence of two white men was noted by the Indians. Also of special note in the Fages' diary was the discovery of the Indians, first seen lurking in trees thought by Fages to be date palms. (The date



Stately Joshua Tree, found only in the Holy Land and in some California desert areas, was thought to be a date palm by the Fages party.
(Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)

Two big attractions in the new town of Lancaster between 1874 and 1902 were the Gillwyn Hotel (now the Hotel Western) and the Lancaster Grammer School. The Hotel is now the town's most famous landmark. (Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)

palms in reality were the stately Joshua Trees, which grow only in the Holy Land and in some California desert areas).

Many other famous names were noted as early visitors to the Antelope Valley. These include Friar Francisco Garces in 1776. Jedediah Smith and party, 1827; John C. Fremont and Kit Carson, 1844; Rogers and Manly of the famous Jayhawker party in 1849, and Lt. Edward Beale, who traveled the southern end of the Valley enroute to Ft. Tejon with his famous camel caravan.

FIRST WHITE SETTLERS

During the 1860 period, the first settlers came to the Valley area and chose the Elizabeth Lake region and the southern end of the Tehachapi mountains for the purpose of ranching.

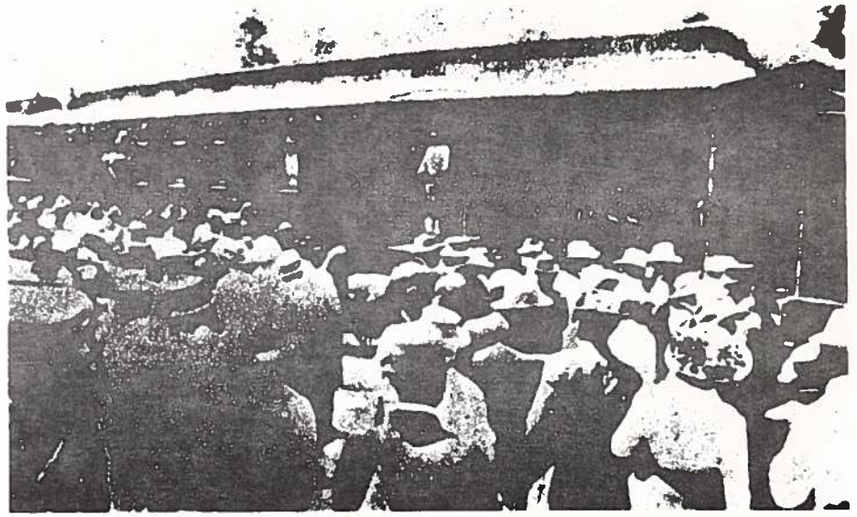
During the late '60's and until 1876, silver bullion was shipped from the Cerro Gordo mine, via Willow Springs and across the western end of the Valley by Remi Nadeau, famous teamster of the early days, and other freighters.

The period between 1870 and 1914 was probably one of the most significant, for it was during this time that the Valley floor became dotted with various colonies of people. Some of the best known colonies were: Wicks, Manzana, Chicago, Kingsbury, John Brown, Old Palmdale, Almondale and Llano.

By September 5, 1876, the Southern Pacific Railroad completed their tracks between San Francisco and Los Angeles, the traditional golden spike being driven by Charles Crocker at Lang Station in Soledad Canyon. Colonies began to give way to townships, and between 1876 and 1882, the towns of Lancaster, Palmdale, Rosamond and Mojave sprung up around the new Southern Pacific Railroad sections.

W. L. Wicks, known in those days as the "Napoleon of the Real Estate Game," founded a Scotch colony of about 150 persons in the Valley. His purchase of six sections of land from the railroad for $2.50 per acre became the town of Lancaster.

Stories of how the name Lancaster was chosen differ. Some say Lancaster was named for Wick's birthplace in Pennsylvania, while others maintain that the



Train arrivals in Antelope Valley in 1876 were big events to the citizens living in the area. It is reported that whole towns would turn out to witness the arrival of the S. P. trains. (Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)

town was dubbed Lancaster by an official of the Southern Pacific Railroad.

However, Wicks was credited with founding the town of Lancaster and subsequently sold the land to J. P. Ward in 1880. By 1900, Ward had sold off most of his purchase to B. F. Carter.

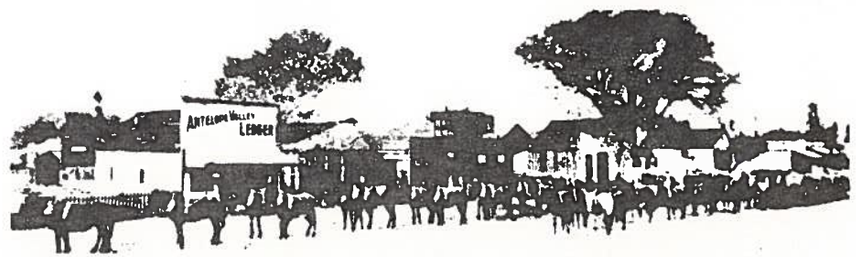
According to Glen Settle, noted authority on Antelope Valley history, Palmdale, the town, is approximately two miles west of Old Palmdale. The Southern Pacific Railroad is credited with the founding of the town. Mr. Settle pointed out the fact that several buildings were constructed by the railroad in Palmdale for the purpose of housing large crews of railroad men whose job it was to assist in getting the freight trains over the steep grade leading out of the Valley.

Rosamond, also founded by the railroad in 1876, was named, according to historians, after the daughter of a Southern Pacific official. Its main purpose for being at that time, was to serve as a shipping point for early day cattlemen.

Mojave was first established as a townsite in 1876 when the Southern Pacific made it a division point. It was so named because of its proximity to the Great Mojave Desert area to the east.

Other notable places during this four year period included Leonis Valley (now

A common sight of the late 1800's and early 1900's in Antelope Valley were the famous "twenty mule teams," used for hauling supplies and equipment. (Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)



Aerial view of Tropico Hill taken in recent years. Photo captures historic Tropico Mine complex on side of hill.
(Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)

called Leona Valley) and Quartz Hill.

Leonis Valley was particularly notable, not because of its geological formation, but more because of its controversial owner, Miguel Leonis, the "Bad Basque." Leonis, a man both feared and respected ... who ruled his land holdings with his own type of law, claimed this section of Antelope Valley as the northern portion of his ranch, which originated in the small community of Calabasas in neighboring San Fernando Valley. (Over the years following Leonis's death in 1900, the name Leonis Valley was shortened and became known as the present day Leona Valley).

The Quartz Hill area became the homestead of the Godde brothers, all migrants from Germany. Early records show that life was not easy for these pioneers. Water supply was always a major problem. Wells were drilled in the hills, but because of the lack of pipe, all of the precious water had to be hauled in barrels by horses and wagons for family use and to water the livestock.

THE ANTELOPE DISAPPEARS

With the beginning of a new era for the Valley, a tragic passing of the old. In just three short years (1882-1885) the Valley lost 30,000 head, almost half, of the Antelope that the area was named after. Heavy snows in both the mountains and the Valley floor drove the graceful Antelope to their normal feeding grounds, located in the eastern portion of the Valley. A mystery, even today, was that the Antelope would not cross over the newly-laid railroad track, hence, many of them starved to death while others became prey for hunters, wildcats and coyotes.

IMPORTANT DATES IN VALLEY HISTORY

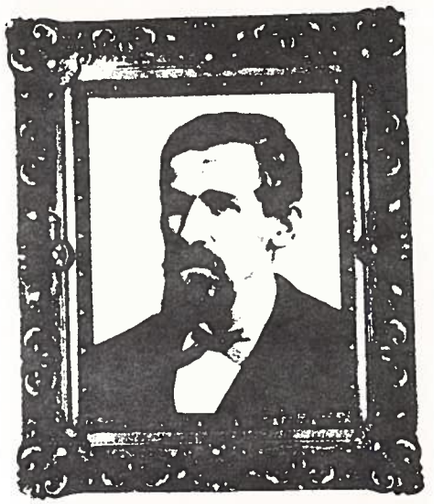
Several events were to take place during the period of 1880 and 1915 that were to shape the course of the future for Antelope Valley.

The period between 1880 and 1910 saw cattle raising as the big industry in the Valley. Names such as Butterworth, Atmore, Rawley, Duntley, Patterson, Kidd, Kinton and others were commonplace to those who were acquainted with the enormous cattle empire that was developed within the Valley boundaries.

Mining got off to an official start in 1880, following the discovery of fire clay deposits at what we know today as Tropico Hill, by Dr. L. A. Crandall. Shortly after his discovery, Dr. Crandall began shipping his crude material from Rosamond to pottery plants in Los Angeles. Fourteen short years later, Ezra Hamilton discovered gold on the north side of the same hill. His first major discovery was not to be made until 1896, after which he constructed a stamp mill on the site.

Visualizing the Antelope Valley as a place of the future, Hamilton began building a health resort at Willow Springs in 1900. Within a few years he constructed a hotel and other buildings in Rosamond, using rock from his mine as the major ingredient in his structures.

A unique highlight in Valley history was the first attempts at setting speed records on Rosamond Dry Lake in 1902 ... unique, because the speed records being set at that time were by sailboats with wheels! Some of the "land schooners" were said to have hit the remarkable speed of 62-plus miles per hour.



Colorful and controversial Miguel Leonis, "the Bad Basque," claimed Leona Valley as part of his land holdings that ranged from Calabasas in San Fernando Valley to Antelope Valley.
(Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)

The year 1898 saw the discovery of borax in the mountains bordering Antelope Valley... just one year after the discovery of borax in the United States.

With 1904 came the use of the gasoline engine to pump water from a well. First to try it was William Burton. So successful was this method of pumping water, that other farmers followed Burton's example and the birth of the great alfalfa industry took place, setting a pace that would ultimately make the Valley one of the biggest producers of alfalfa in the state.

From 1905 through the year 1913 the Valley was to see many new faces. During this period workers on the Los Angeles-Inyo Aqueduct project swelled the Valley population.

Enjoying the population explosion of 1905 to 1913 was the late George T. Webber, owner of the now famous Western Hotel in Lancaster. So great was the demand for rooms by the aqueduct workers, the local hotel owner had to put up 24 tents on one side of the hotel and 12 tents on the other to accommodate guests.

With 1910 came the homesteading of the west side of Rodgers Dry Lake by the Corum family. Shortly thereafter, a small town was to get its beginnings under the name of Muroc (Corum spelled backwards). Today, we know the area as Edwards.

TWO NEW INSTITUTIONS FOR THE VALLEY

By 1912, Valley residents' needs grew to the point that its first bank, the Bank of Lancaster, opened its doors for business and began serving the pubic.

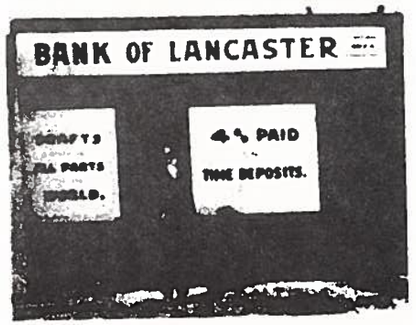
During this same year, Antelope Valley High School was founded to provide needed classroom space for the rapidly growing student population of the area.

Electricity via power lines were introduced to Antelope Valley in 1914 by the Pacific Light and Power Company who later sold to Southern California Edison Company.

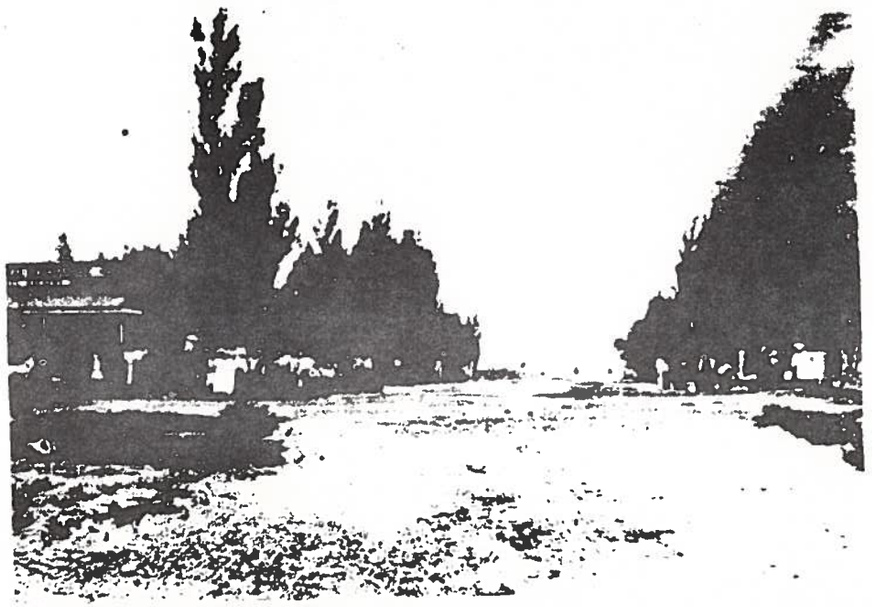
1915 saw the first Antelope Valley Fair, now a major attraction for thousands of Southern California residents as well as Antelope Valley residents annually.

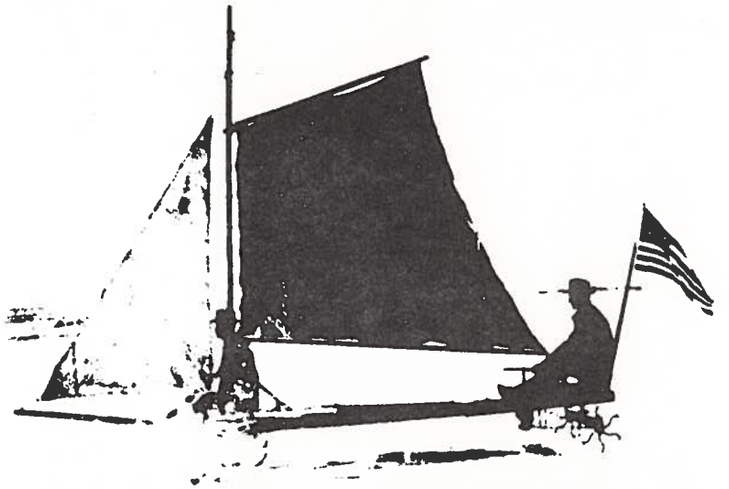
The years marched on...1916; the first oiled road was under construction

Bank of Lancaster opened its doors to the public in 1912 (Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)



Now just a memory to old-timers of the Antelope Valley were the Fourth of July celebrations of the early 1900's. 1908 photo shows horse race being run on 10th Street in Lancaster (now Lancaster Blvd.), a major highlight to the July 4 activities. (Courtesy: Goldcamp Museum)





One of the first speed records to be set on Rosamond Dry Lake was by the "Desert Queen" in 1902. Old land sail boat was said to have sailed to a record 62 miles per hour. (Courtesy: Antelope Valley Press)

Following the homesteading of the west side of Rodgers Dry Lake by the Corum family in 1910, the small community of Muroc became a reality. Photo shows early settlers of Muroc about 1917. (Courtesy: Edwards AFB)

Breaking the world's endurance record in 1930 over Rosamond Dry Lake, was Warren McClatchie. McClatchie airplane stayed aloft for more than 30 days and was refueled from a speeding car on the lake below.
(Courtesy: Antelope Valley Press)

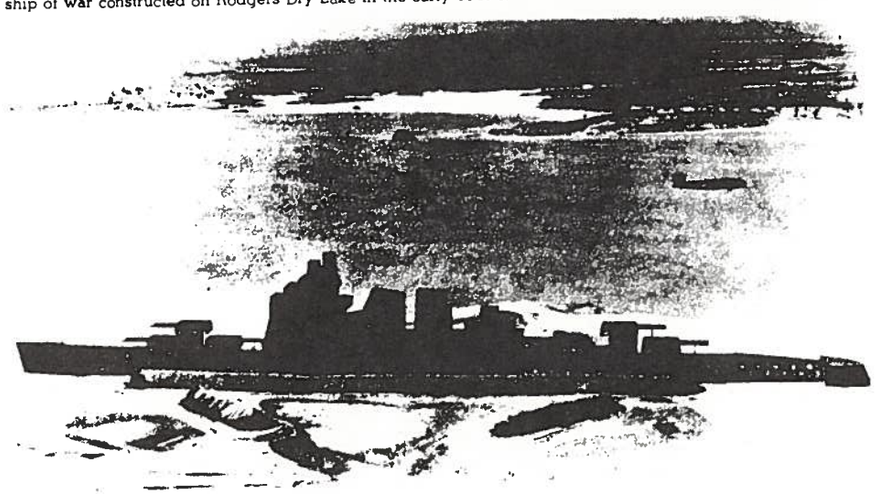
between the Valley and Saugus . . . 1926-1933; Muroc and Rosamond Dry Lakes became the racing center of the country for "high powered" racing automobiles . . . 1929; classes begin at Antelope Valley Junior College . . . 1930; Warren McClatchie sets world endurance record in a light single engine plane over Rosamond Dry Lake.

POPULATION EXPLOSION GETS INTO FULL SWING

Attributed as the biggest major cause of the Valley's population explosion was the establishment of the Army Air Corps at Muroc Dry Lake in 1933. This and the later establishment of Plant 42 in Palmdale, introduced thousands of newcomers to the Valley area. Originally known as Muroc Air Force Base, the name was to be changed in 1950 to Edwards Air Force Base in honor of test pilot Capt. Glen W. Edwards, killed while testing the YB-49 flying wing.

The first military contingent at Muroc Dry Lake was established on the Lake's east side, but its aircraft testing possibilities were not put into use until World War II.

A B-25 Mitchell bomber makes a low level pass at the famous Muroc-Maru, a full scale mock-up of a Japanese ship of war constructed on Rodgers Dry Lake in the early 1940's. (Courtesy: Edwards AFB)



By then the south end of the lake was primarily used as a training field for the P-38 Lightening fighter, B-24 Liberator and B-25 Mitchell bomber crews. Bombing practice commenced over the lake and targets included a realistic 650-foot model of a Japanese navy heavy cruiser of the "Mogami" class, dubbed the "Muroc-Maru."

Pilots and bombardiers used the "Muroc-Maru" for strafing, identification and skip bombing practice. Undulating mounds of dirt piled alongside the replica and shimmering heat waves from the hot desert sun made it look like a real ship afloat . . . a startling sight to many a passing motorist. The "Muroc-Maru" became a thing of the past in 1950 when it was dismantled and "de-bombed" by Army engineers.

Muroc Air Force Base then, even as today, has witnessed many firsts in the field of aviation. On October 1, 1942, at the north end of the lake, the first jet airplane was test flown. On October 14, 1947, Capt. Charles E. Yaeger tested the Bell X-1 high above the lake and became the first man to break the sound barrier.

The skies above the Antelope Valley are synonymous with all of the advancements in aviation. With the development of the Intercontinental Airport, a 17,000 acre air travel complex destined to become a major center of world-wide travel and commerce. The Valley will continue to fulfill the dreams of Pioneer men with futuristic vision who brought to the area the major ingredients for its success.

ACQUISITION AREA for Palmdale Intercontinental Airport, combined with adjacent Air Force Plant 42, provides a total of 23,000 acres devoted to aviation. Plans call for development of facilities to handle 100 million passengers annually and include four 14,000-foot runways and two 4,000 foot STOL aircraft runways.

MR. BULKLEY

One of the Picturesque Figures
of Early Days in Antelope Valley

I came to the valley in 1890. I first settled near Littlerock and filed on a homestead. I was elected Justice of the Peace in 1892. At that time there were two Justices in the Township. One was here and the other in the southern end. The Township lines were the same as they are today. From the summit of the mountains near Vincent, that is the south line, the summit of the mountains to a point down Bouquet Canyon twenty-five miles southeast of Lancaster. Then it zig-zags north and east until it reaches the Kern County line, a point about seven miles west of here. And the north line is from that point following the Kern County line east to the San Bernardino County line.

I stayed down in Palmdale until 1901. In 1898 the law was amended so that Townships of this size only had one Justice instead of two, and in 1898 I was elected to the whole township, defeating the Lancaster man. I have tried cases in Littlerock. I have tried on one occasion in the case of shooting a man way over near the San Bernardino line. The trial had to be held in the presence of the wounded man. It was a case of the people versus a couple of men that had gone through the country. Several of the citizens had tried to arrest him and he shot this man. The district attorney and stenographers came from Los Angeles. I came to Lancaster to reside in 1901. The Court has been located here since. In those days there were a good many hobos to be tried. I have seen the time when there were as many as a hundred hobos in Lancaster.

Men going through the country in those days gathered around and burned wood. This was after Cocksey's army. Sometimes I would pick out the worst hobos and send them up, and I would let others go. They bothered the people a whole lot. They would burn railroad ties.

We had a great many cattle cases. The most prominent was that of Mace Mays. He was supposed to be the leader of the cattle thieves of the valley. He, for a while, was constable here in Lancaster. He had a partner in a butcher shop, another partner in a saloon, and stock men had suspected him of stealing cattle for quite a while. They would never be able to catch him until 1895. A man by the name of George Vanderian, a man of his gang, went out into the Esperanza neighborhood and stole a blue steer, and drove it away off into the Elizabeth Lake country up the canyon and butchered it. It happened that he had a Mexican helping him and a few weeks after the theft and butchering of the steer, the Mexican fell out with him and he told the officers about it and Mace was arrested. I held his trial at Palmdale. His trial lasted about ten days. Half the population of the Antelope Valley was present. He was convicted and given six years at San Quentin. Mace Mayes was considered the leader of the cattle thieves of the valley. There were cases along the same line later on, but no cases like that. That was a very lawless gang. He was elected in 1890 and they defeated him after that. He tried twice more and he was defeated. Soon after his second defeat they got him. He would give a man a drink and go out that night and steal his cow. That is the most prominent case we ever had in the valley. There is no comparison in the work now and the work there was then.

We had quite an increase in settlers in 1906. There has been a gradual increase right along. In the last two years it has been quite noticeable, and it has been steady. Men elected with me as constable were John A. Little, Frank Dowler, then later Marcus Andrada in 1898. Harry Butterworth 1902, Oliver Litchy (Mitchell) 1906, Garfield Carter 1910, re-elected; he resigned and H.E. Blidden was appointed in his place; and Cummings was appointed in his place.

When I came to the valley there was quite an acreage of grain in the west end of the valley. The valley started to settle in the 80's and in those years

there was pretty good rainfall and big acreage from the extreme end of the valley along the foot hills almost to Lancaster.

The portion east of here was very thickly settled and very little raised. Just occasional places where they would have a patch of alfalfa, and maybe some fruit trees. There were, of course, a number of settlers, but they were scattered here and there. In the southern part of the valley there were occasional places where there were orchards, but not very much acreage put in. In 1906 the settlers came into the valley to take up land in the water belt. The gasoline engines were being improved.

I came to file on a homestead. It was a new country and I wanted Land. The Socialist colony didn't start until about 1914-15. The settlement was already started there.

The valley wasn't backward in those days. Way along in the 90's they organized a Womans Club near Fairmont. There were a good deal of cultured people living around Fairmont in those days. Miss Kathryn Anderson lived there. She took a prominent part in it.

In May 1895 we organized an Antelope Valley Association here at Lancaster. The object was to organize the people and look for the interest of the valley. In those days we began to agitate for roads, and we formed an organization to meet twice a year here at Lancaster. Then, we had three divisions, the central, western, and eastern division. We maintained that until the latter part of 1896, and a good many people left the western end then. In 1894 we had a dry year and they began to leave. Mr. Sprague was president and Walter Melick, of the Gazette, was secretary. He took a good deal of interest in the Littlerock country. He was vice president from that division. John Carter was a member of the association; he was here at that time. Mr. A. Ruthledge was one of the first members, Harry Butterworth, Morris Renold's father, W. H. Holland, County Probation Officer, was one of the first members, and he was teaching school at that time. Mr. Oldham was a member. He was in Almondale at that time. He was developing a place there. So many left that the interest died off.

The grass and the wild flowers were abundant in those days. We used to have lots of rain. We have had water in the dry lakes. Every year the lakes would fill up.

In the very early days they used to haul Antelopes by the wagon load and sell to the people. Roney Crane was a member of the Mayes gang. He used to shoot Antelopes, bring them here and sell them to people for meat. I never saw any in the west end. Along in 1880 there were quite a few, but in 1890 there weren't any left. They ran across the Fairmont hills across the valley. I saw just one bunch since I have been here. That was twelve years ago. They used to run out there on the other side of Five Points. Roney got religious and used to stand up and speak it to us. He came into my office and was shot. They thought it was the Justice of the Peace who was Mace Mayes uncle. They drew lots and it came upon him to kill Roney. Roney was reading a great big law book. Roney's life was saved; the shot took effect in the book. That was before he got religious. He drifted in here a few years ago. They say he is dead now. He had some relatives in Ventura County and they would tell a lot of funny things about Roney. He was a bad man to find; he was a pretty dubious charactor. They suspicioned him a good deal around. He must have been in the fifties. Mace Mayes was forty-five or fifty when he was convicted.

"JUDGE BULKLEY"

by

Myrtle E. Breslin
March - 1957

One of the outstanding persons to come to Antelope Valley was Judge Bulkely. He came here in 1890 and settled on a homestead near Littlerock, but made his main home in Palmdale until 1901.

He was elected Justice of the Peace in 1892. At that time there were two Justices in this township. One was here and the other in the southern end. The township lines were the same as they are today. From the summit of the mountains near Vincent, that is the south line; to the summit of the mountains to a point down Bouquet Canyon twenty-five miles south-east of Lancaster; then it zig-zags north and east until it reaches the Kern County line, a point about seven miles west of Lancaster. And the north line is from that point following the Kern County line to the San Bernardino County line.

In 1898 the laws were amended so that townships of this size only had one Justice instead of two, and in 1898 he was elected to the whole township, defeating the Lancaster man.

Judge Bulkley tried cases all over the valley - Littlerock, Palmdale, and one case was held over near the San Bernardino line. This trial had to be held in the presence of the wounded man, who had been shot by a couple of men going through the country who were wanted by the police. Several citizens had tried to arrest the fugitive, so when this man tried to arrest him he shot the man, but was caught and tried by Judge Bulkley. The District Attorney and stenographers had to come from Los Angeles, and this was all in horse and buggy days.

In 1901 Judge Bulkley moved to Lancaster, but the Court was not located there until later. Those were the days when there were many hobos traveling through the country. Judge Bulkley says he has seen as many as one hundred hobos in Lancaster at one time. These men going through Lancaster would gather together and build big fires out of stolen rail road ties or any other wood they could filch to burn. Sometimes the Judge would pick out the worst hobos and convict them, then let the rest go, as there was not enough room to lock all of them up.

There were a great many cattle cases in those days, mostly for rustling cattle (stealing). One of the most prominent cases Judge Bulkley had was that of Mace Mays. He was supposed to be the leader of the cattle thieves of the Valley. He, for a while, was constable in Lancaster. He had a partner in a butcher shop, and another partner in a saloon. Stock men had suspected him of stealing cattle for quite a while. They were never able to catch him until 1895. A man by the name of George Vanderian, a man of Mays' gang, went out into the Esperanza neighborhood and stole a blue steer, and drove it away off into the Elizabeth Lake country up in a canyon and butchered it. It happened that Vanderian had a Mexican working for him, and a few weeks after the theft and butchering of the steer, the Mexican and Vanderian had a falling out. So the Mexican went to the local officers and told them about the ring of thieves, naming Mace Mays as the ring-leader. So Mays was arrested. Judge Bulkley held the trial in Palmdale. The trial lasted about ten days. Half of the population of Antelope Valley was present. Mays was convicted and given six years in San Quentin.

John A. Little, Frank Dowler and Marcus Andrada were three of the men serving as constables with Judge Bulkley prior to 1898. Constables elected to serve with Judge Bulkley in the early days of Antelope Valley Courts were -

1902, Harry Butterworth; 1906, Oliver Litchy Mitchell; 1910, Garfield Carter, and re-elected in 1914. He resigned and H. E. Bidden was appointed in his place and when Bidden resigned Ed Cummings was appointed to fill the vacancy. Constable Cummings was in office when we came here in 1921 and remained in office until his health forced him to resign, which was years later.

When Judge Bulkley came to Littlerock there was a large acreage of wheat in the west end where the wheat is grown today. The Valley started to settle in the 1880's and in those years there was plenty of rain-fall and wheat was grown from the extreme west end of the valley along the foothills almost to Lancaster.

The east side of the valley was very sparsely settled and very little raised - small patches of alfalfa and a few fruit trees. There were quite a few settlers, but they were so scattered over all of the east and south side of the valley.

In 1906 more settlers started coming in and settling in the water belt, using gasoline pumps on their wells.

In the early 1890's the first Womans Club was organized near Fairmont. Miss Kathryn Anderson was the leader in the cultural activities at this time and there were quite a group with her in her activities on the west side.

In 1895 Judge Bulkley helped organize an Antelope Valley Association in Lancaster. The object was to organize the people to work for the interest of the entire Valley. This group also formed the first road committee for meeting twice a year and making plans for better roads. A Mr. Sprague was president of the organization and Walter Melick was Secretary. He was associated with the Lancaster Gazette at that time.

He was also more interested in the development of the Littlerock district. Some of the other members of this first Valley Association were John Carter, Mr. A. Ruthledge, Harry Butterworth, W. H. Holland who was the county probation officer and a school teacher. Mr. Oldham lived at Almondale. But there came an unusual dry year and many of the people from the west side moved from where most of the members came, so the organization lost so many of the active members that it almost quit functioning.

Before these dry years came, all of the dry lakes would fill with water every year. There were plenty of Antelopes and they were killed by the wagon load and sold to the people in the settlements. Roney Crane, a member of the Mace Mays gang, shot and sold the Antelope to the people in Lancaster. Later Roney got religion and would preach around in Lancaster. One day he came into Judge Bulkleys office and was reading a big law book. He was mistaken for the other Justice of the Peace, and uncle of Mace Mays, and was shot at by a man who had drawn the lot to shoot Roney, but the shot hit the book and saved Roney's life.

When Judge Bulkley retired from duty in the Antelope Township he moved to Los Angeles and was affiliated with the Los Angeles Courts until his death in the 1930's.

It is significant that the greater part of the time of the local county officers is consumed with civil work. This is somewhat of a contrast to the conditions existing here in 1889 when the court records showed very little business in the civil nature, but plenty of cases of petty crime, such as drunkenness, disorderly conduct, stealing rides on trains, cattle stealing, with an occasional murder thrown in.

LITTLEROCK AND VICINITY

by

Myrtle E. Breslin

So far as records show, the first house built in the vicinity of Littlerock was built by Juan Garcia on the bank of the Littlerock creek about a mile above Littlerock. This adobe house was built about 1850. Juan Garcia was killed by a bear in 1870 in Santiago Canyon. Santiago Canyon is about a mile above the Palmdale Littlerock Dam, which was not built until 1923 and 24. This cabin was also used as a stop station by the Butterfield Stage on the Fort Tejon Road which ran by the cabin. This adobe cabin was still in good condition as late as 1912. At this time the William Sinclair Sr. family lived there when they first came to Littlerock. Mrs. Ora Watson, - Mrs. William Sinclair Sr. - and her son Bill are still in Littlerock.

Many prospectors camped on the Littlerock creek prospecting for gold, and it is reported that placer mining was very good for a time near the Garcia Seaneca. This is at the submerged dam for storing water for the use of Littlerock. Years ago this Seaneca was used for a picnic grounds for the social life of Littlerock. They held big Fourth of July picnics there and Sunday School picnics besides just social get- togethers. If it were only cleared up of dead trees and brush, it would still be a fine place for picnics or bar-b-ques, as they are generally called now.

Wild horses roamed the desert north of Littlerock, east of 90th St.; and the cow-punchers would catch them and try to break them. The last wild horse was killed by John Mathis in 1895. The Mathis family lived up in the hills above Littlerock. They were among the early settlers. Mrs. Mathis was an Ellis, a sister of George Ellis who lives on Avenue T near 90th St.

Among the first settlers in Littlerock were Bent and Rowan. Bent was the father of the Bent brothers who built the Littlerock, Palmdale dam. Later Bent sold this property to the four Cole Brothers. Later two of the Cole brothers sold their interests to a man named Billings who joined with the remaining Cole brothers to establish the Littlerock Irrigation District on March 28th, 1892. The Cole brothers raised horses and some alfalfa.

Billings built the two story stone house at 77th St. and Highway 138. This house was used as a hotel. Mrs. Everett Martin has the old register that was used at that time.

Mr. and Mrs. Amasa Martin and their four children, Everett, Bessie, Harry and Ada, were the first to settle in Littlerock and plant pear trees. Up to this time only almonds or prunes had been planted. Mr. Martin Sr. bought the place now occupied by the Antelope Valley Soil Conservation District for a nursery and planted it to pears. Later he bought the property on the corner of 77th St. and Highway 138, the two story stone house where the Martins lived since. The pear orchard is cared for by George Martin, the son of Everett. Everett Martin shipped the first ton of pears out of Littlerock to Los Angeles in 1901.

Pears grown in Littlerock district are of the finest quality, having the highest sugar content. Also, by controlled irrigation, they have the best keeping quality of pears grown anywhere.

The first post office was established in 1893 and the first post-mistress was Mrs. Bonam, who was a visitor in this vicinity in 1957. Littlerock has had postal service continuously since it was started.

The first store was opened in 1894, being a general country store. As there were so few people living in and around Littlerock at that time, it failed after about a year.

The first school was held in half of the old Barton packing shed near Avenue U and 77th Street. Mattie Stanton (Mrs. Russel Primer) was the first school teacher.

In the same year, an acre of ground near Highway 138 and 77th St. was bought for a school. A shed from out on the desert was moved onto the back of the acre and Mattie Stanton taught there until the new school house was completed for school to open March 13, 1913. This was a one room school. In 1923 two more rooms were added to the school house. The original school house was built at a cost of about $1800.00. In 1928 the new Keppel Union School house was built at 8244 Pearblossom Highway in Littlerock at a cost of about $77,000.

Pearblossom Highway was built in 1924 or 1925. It was the first major road in this area.

The Littlerock Chamber of Commerce - then known as "The South Antelope Valley Land-owners Chamber of Commerce" - membership consisted of people all on the south side of Antelope Valley. Ben Brainard was the first Chairman of the Littlerock Chamber of Commerce.

It was thrcugh the efforts of the Chamber of Commerce that the streets in Littlerock were paved, as they were all narrow dirt roads. It has only been in recent years that most of the streets are black-topped. Much time and effort was spent in getting easements for the road widening, as many of the people did not like giving up a few feet of property for widening the roads intc streets.

At one time the Indians camped in the vicinity of the Sheriffs Posse ranch on the banks of the Littlerock creek. Just south of the Posse ranch is a large boulder with holes in it where the Indians ground their corn. Many relics of the Indians have been found in this area. Indians ranged all over the valley and some were still living here when the Pallett family came here. They lived above Pearblossom.

The Indians would go to the Pallett home to trade for coffee or sugar. They would trade half a deer for a cup of sugar or coffee. They worked for just enough money to buy a few clothes and food. They shot all of their meat with bows and arrows - even birds.

Several tried raising cattle and did well in wet years. There was much more rain-fall a few years back; lots of feed in the hills and on the desert.

There were great cloud-bursts, nearly always in August and September. A few years ago hail and rain beat roofs off houses and nearly washed out Littlerock. One family almost drowned in their car.

THE STORY OF FRANCIS GAGE

by

Myrtle E. Breslin - July 1957

Francis Gage has had another hunch, he acted on this hunch and it will pay off.

When they lost the vein of gold ore in the Don Mining Claim No. I at the Gage mines about a mile south of Acton Juntion and across the highway on the side of the hill, plainly seen from Sierra Highway, Francis Gage shut down the works, as they had drifted in different directions trying to hit the vein again, with no luck. So Francis went to Arizona for a few months, setting up machinery for other mines and looking over mining in general. Then he came back to Southern California and started thinking of the Don Mining Claim and the lost vein of gold. Then he had another hunch to go back to work with a bull-dozer and take off the top of the ground where his hunch told him the vein would come near the surface, which he followed. The bull-dozer had worked about ten hours when it hit the vein.

Francis and a young engineer by the name of Jim Cowling went to work getting out samples of the ore. The general run will bring from $50.00 to $60.00 a ton, but the high grade will bring from $60,000 to $90,000 a ton.

Mr. and Mrs. Gage are old, old frineds of Gene's and mine, so Francis called me on the phone last Friday to come over and spend the day with them and look over this new find, which I did last Saturday. Had lunch with them and we went up into the claim and dug out specimens from the vein and examined them right there, being able to see the gold in the ore by the use of miners' glasses - and right here I am telling you if you go around gold diggin's looking for gold, take your own mining glasses. It is like asking one to use their dentures to ask a miner to use his glasses, which I did, so you can plainly see I must have a stand in to do such an unheard of thing, but Francis and Jim were both grand about the loaning of their glasses to me, and was it ever a thrill to really see those nuggets of gold hidden in the quartz ore.

After doing our mining in the boiling hot sun, we took our samples down to the house, and in the shade, to grind them up into very small pieces so as to pan them. Panning gold is to have some of this ground ore in a small iron or steel pan, a small frying pan with the handle taken off is a fine gold pan. You run water over the ore and keep the pan in a small rotation movement so the lighter rock will wash off. You do this until you have most of the heavier stuff washed away, then you will see the gold trailing along as you move the pan in a circular motion swirling the water and ore around the edge of the pan. You have to see it to appreciate it.

Francis gave me a lovely piece of High-Grade. It would run $100,000 ton. But sad to say, this kind of ore is scarce, but this piece I have was taken out right there before my eyes. He also gave me other specimens of the regular ore. With a glass one can see the gold.

But with labor as high as it is and materials as high as they are, it is almost prohibitive to operate a gold mine. Besides the set-up with the Government in regards to mining gold and the tax to be paid, one can plainly see it is a rich man's hobby, for the profit is small.

Francis Gage took out over $2,000,000 from the Governor mine. He worked that mine about nine years. Gage has been interested in mining all his life, as he made many trips here to the Valley with his father, the late Henry T. Gage, who was Governor of California from 1899 to 1903. Francis remembers staying in the Pearland Hotel when it was the only business building in Palmdale, when he was eight or ten years old.

When he shut down the high grade mine, besides loosing the vein, he could not depend on his miners to return to work after each weekend. It seems the old timers were great for spending their money for hard liquor, and most of the time they were not able to show up for work on Monday after a Saturday night spree. So it isn't just taking out the gold and keeping it. One has to know where to take it from, then where to get dependable men to work with you, not to mention the many other incidentals, such as insurance, which comes high where explosives are used; materials, such as lumber, and it takes a lot of heavy timbers to be used for cribbing, (lining the mine shafts and the tunnels.), steel for reinforcing, not to mention all the machinery, so I would advise one to think twice before going into the mining business regardless of how much high grade ore one may have. Still, there are the dry wash miners, who say they make wages, but they do what is called placer mining - finding the gold in free dirt or sand. There is lots of placer gold in the hills here. We have panned out colors from sand we find in the little canyons leading off from Littlerock Creek, and that is fun for just seeing if you can find gold, but not much money.

"GOLD"

by

Myrtle E. Breslin

There is GOLD in them thar hills. Where? Where one finds it. A prospector may spend weeks searching for the precious metal in good location - without finding even one color; he will go on to other prospecting locations to look. In the mean-time a tender-foot will be just hiking over where the prospector has just left, not looking for anything, and wouldn't know gold if he would see it, he suddenly stumbles over the root of a sage brush, falls, and in getting up from his fall, notices peculiar yellow pebbles in the rocks of the sage brush, having never seen these kind of stones, he takes a few for specimens, puts them with other stones he has in his collection and forgets them until some other rock hound comes along, and on seeing these pretty stones, about has a fit. "Where'd you get these? When?" And then informs the finder that they are GOLD. The hunt is on, as the finder has forgotten just where he did find them. He may find the place again and he may not. Many a gold rush has been brought on by just such a find.

For years the great Mojave Desert has been the favored field of the prospector, a land high in gold to him who was lucky enough to find it; and there were many; and millions of dollars worth of gold was sent to the mint from the area surrounding Palmdale and Lancaster.

The first gold strike in California was in the Placerita Canyon on the rim of the desert to the south and from this strike the first gold from the state was shipped to the United States Mint and not from the Mother Lode in the north as many suppose.

Gold is the magnet which has always lured men and thousands are the toll which this lure has claimed on the parched wastelands of the desert or the frozen lands of the North Country, but ever and with increasing zeal the search goes on. Now the more precious metal, uranium, has been added to the search.

This will always be a prospector's paradise and new members will be joining the old legion continuously. From time to time there are new prospectors coming through Littlerock Canyon on their way to the hills above the dam, where they have been told there is gold to be found. They stop here to inquire if I know the where-abouts of these old prospect diggin's. I do not know

where any of these old prospect mines are. We have been told many tales of gold having been discovered back in the hills and have known many who looked for it. If they ever found it, we do not know.

On the north rim of the Mojave Desert great mining districts flourished. Towns were built and became famous through the fabulous riches of their mines, then became ghost towns as the mines closed and the population moved on to greener fields, or yellower, as the case might be. Some of these old gold camps were reopened, new ledges and veins were discovered, which happens many times in the mining country.

The greater portion of the gold in this district was more or less free gold - free from the base metals and can be treated at a minimum of cost by the cyanide process, or rag mills, as they are called in the mines in some districts in Colorado.

Prospectors have covered the Mojave Desert for almost a century, the surrounding hills and mountains as well, in fact for so many years and by so many prospectors that one supposes that every chance for new discovery is impossible. But to the contrary, it is doubtful if the surface has been scratched.

The Governor mine, located near Acton, about seven miles south of Palmdale, was a few years ago the largest producing gold mine in Los Angeles County. This mine was owned and operated by Francis Gage, son of the late Governor Gage of California. Francis Gage worked by "hunches", when they were making a drift to try to hit a rich vein the the Governor mine, he had a "hunch" at what angle to drift and how many feet they would have to drift to hit the vein. On the strength of this hunch he made a bet that they would hit the vein at the certain point. He also bought plenty of refreshments and had them on hand at the given time. They hit the vein as he predicted. A short time after this he fell down the shaft and was very severely injured. He was in the hospital for months with little encouragement that he would ever do any more mining. But the day came when he had another "hunch" to sink another shaft in another location, south of the old Governor mine and across Highway 6 just south of Acton Junction. Mrs. Gage hesitated to let him do any more prospecting, but as he was so restless doing nothing, she consented to his again prospecting. He was just going on a hunch where to dig and how deep. He sunk a shaft 90 feet deep and drifted on the vein for 100 feet. Gage reported that the gold vein was six inches to a foot wide. He took samples to Los Angeles and a laboratory there reported that some of the samples would assay $40,000 a ton.

A STORY OF A WILSONA HOMESTEADER -
Carl D. Edwards

April 9, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

We came to Antelope Valley in 1914. A man by the name of Charles was the locater of our Homestead. He had his headquarters on the edge of El Mirage Dry Lake. There were four families of us from Manhattan Beach, California. Fred Berry, Tom Brown and a Manhattan family by the name of Perkins, and our family, the Edwards. We chartered an Emigrant Car from the Santa Fe Railroad in Manhattan Beach, California, and went to Los Angeles and were switched over to Southern Pacific Railroad and came to Palmdale, which was a wide place in the road. There were not many roads in Antelope Valley at that time. We had to travel by team of horses and wagons from Palmdale through Littlerock, on out to Big Rock, which was just being settled by Job Harriman, and his Socialist Colony. There was a dirt road across the desert from Llano which was a lot of sand and we got stuck in the desert, and I took our stock and what we could carry on horse-back and started across the desert, about twelve miles to our homesteads. We came to a little place with a well and watered our stock. The homesteader happened to be Alvin Tidd, who I believe lots of people in the Valley remember. We stayed there through the night and the next morning Mr. Tidd took his team of mules and moved us onto our homestead. We all set up our tents and got settled so we could bring the rest of our families out. I had a team of horses and a spring wagon. We had to haul water until we could dig a well by hand. I struck water in my well on New Years Day, January 1, 1915.

There was no work in the district, so we had to depend on doing assessment work for people with desert homesteads. We got $7.00 per acre for clearing and plowing, and $1.50 per foot for digging a well. The way we cleared the land was with a railroad rail 18 or 20 feet long and a team of horses on each end. We pulled this across the brush and the most of it came out by the roots.

After we got the family settled, the next thing was to have a school. I don't remember how we got $1500.00, as there was no tax land to vote bonds. I think the County Superintendent of Schools, Mr. Keppel, helped us out that way. Anyway, we were donated two acres by a man by the name of Dunsmere close to where the old Wilsona Ranch was, which was homesteaded by Mr. Huff. We got the school built and the first School Board was elected. Joe McGowan, A. W. Brewer and Carl D. Edwards. I, Carl Edwards, did not send any children to the Wilsona School. We had to have transportation for the kids to school. Fred Berry got the first job, then Mrs. Ethel Wakefield had the job. We moved into the Roosevelt District and that is where my two oldest children started to school. I resigned the School Board February, 1917, and W. M. Kent was appointed to fill the vacancy. Mr. A. W. Brewer resigned May, 1918, and Mr. E. F. Wilson was appointed to fill the vacancy. Mr. A. C. Huff and Mr. A. L. McCaleb and Mr. John H. Brewer were on the School Board 1918 to 1919.

Most of the land was cleared in the day time, and at night they would burn the brush. It was quite a sight at night to see brush fires scattered through the desert. I knew the desert first in 1909, when the old original aqueduct was being built. I came out and got a job from contractors out at Fairmont. I worked for them from October to January. There was a big snow storm that winter and the contractors shut down the job. They were putting in Elizabeth Lake Tunnel at that time and I got a job in the power house. John Grey was superintendent. My oldest daughter was born there. Our home was right down in the middle of where the Lake is now, at the north end of the tunnel.

There are a lot more people and things to write about, but I can't think of the names now. Hope this gives you some information of the early days of the Wilsona District.

Sincerely,

Carl D. Edwards
323 West Avenue I
Lancaster, California

The Story of Merle B. Scofield

April 8, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I, Merle B. Scofield, was born in New York. In 1907, my parents, one sister, a brother and I came to California and settled in Los Angeles County.

In May of 1915, I came to Antelope Valley in a covered wagon, with a team of horses and one riding pony. A friend of mine, Charley Wyley, came with me. It took us three days and three nights to come from Los Angeles to the Job Harriman's Socialist Colony. The Colony was located in what is now called Llano. (Some of the remains are still there.) We came through Soledad Canyon, over wagon track roads, etc. We followed the Southern Pacific railroad track whenever possible. We went through Acton and into Palmdale (a small railroad town then). We crossed the Santa Clara River several times and had to ford the river each time. After we left Palmdale, we had to ford the Littlerock and the Big Rock washes, where they crossed the road.

We spent the night at the Colony. Next day we came on over to where our homestead land was located; near the Black Butte, Section 33 township 6 North Range 8 West; now known as being in the Wilsona district. We hauled lumber from Palmdale and built a wood platform and a wood frame and stretched our tent over it, making a tent house. All the furniture we had was a wood cook stove, two beds, and we made a table, and had a kerosene lantern. We hauled our water from Moody Springs, several miles from our place, in oak barrels. Later we hand dug a well, which turned out to be a dry hole.

Later on some of the other homesteaders and we went together and formed our own crew. We had three teams of horses, a hay baler, a cook shack, etc. Our crew went into Roosevelt and baled hay for the ranchers. Also, we hauled hay from the Roosevelt district, over wagon track dirt roads and trails into Lancaster and loaded the baled hay into box cars at the railroad station. They had Saturday night dances at the Job Harriman's Socialist Colony. Everyone for miles around would come. We rode horseback to the dances. I became very good friends with the Lecher family. They had a homestead at that time in what is now known as Llano District. I had Thanksgiving dinner with them, Thanksgiving 1915.

In 1916 a one room school house was built for the community. It was for all eight grades. There was only one teacher. There was not any school buses at that time and the children either rode horseback or came by horse and wagon to school. There was not any electricity or well. They hauled water from the McGowan Ranch and stored it in oak barrels. There was an oak bucket and a dipper used for drinking water. They used a wood stove for heating and kerosene lamps. All the neighbors for miles around came to the opening celebration of the Wilsona School, including myself. There was dancing, singing, home made pies and cakes, etc., and a real good time was had by all. Later on a well was dug and a windmill put on it for the Wilsona School.

In 1917 I left the Valley and entered the armed forces - World War I. I did not come back and complete our homestead. Later on someone else took up the claim.

On June 28th, 1922, I married Emily Elizabeth Bailey. She was a concert violinist. After our marriage, she was a music instructor of violin and piano. We built our home on the corner of 87th Street East and Hickory Street, Los Angeles. We lived there for over 18 years. In 1940 we came to the Antelope Valley, in the Wilsona Valley area, and purchased 120 acres of land with a three room house on it, from Elmer and Thelma Hibbard. In 1944 we purchased several hundred more acres from Southern Pacific Railroad Company.

In 1941 my wife, Emily, our two sons, Merle T. and William E., and I moved to Antelope Valley, Wilsona District, and made our home here. We still live here. Our ranch is known by and registered as "Black Butte Ranch". Our sons are graduates of Antelope Valley Joint Union High School and Junior College. In 1941-1942 there were about 750 students enrolled and only one high school; today there are five high schools and about 7,500 enrollment in Antelope Valley High School. Our son Bill also graduated from Wilsona Elementary School. There were only four graduates that year; Ida Barnett, Dixie Lee Hansen, Phoebe Anne Ogden and William (Bill) Scofield.

We went into cattle ranching, and our brand was "S-4" for us four Scofields.

Before moving to Antelope Valley, we were owners of the J. S. Torrence Leather Co. We were one of the biggest buyers of leather in California. I operated the business.

In January 1945, my wife, Emily, went to work as a Deputy Assessor Appraiser for Los Angeles County Assessor's Office. She will tell you about her work and the growth of the Valley, etc.

Sincerely,

MERLE B. SCOFIELD
21413 East Avenue "S"
P.O. BOX 1897
Lancaster, California

* *

Mrs. Arthur R. Wallace
39142 Ocotillo Drive, Palmdale, California 93550

March 14, 1972

Dear Mr. Gordon

Thank you so much for the Antelope Valley Reminiscences. It will be treasured not only by us, but by future generations.

I'm so glad you remembered us.

Sincerely,
Wallace

LETTER FROM VICKIE MARIS
August 1973

Dear Shelton,

You asked me to write a story about Bob for this second edition of your book. I felt that I could not do it properly, so I asked Dixie Chaney to do it for me. She is the wife of Jack Chaney, who was associated with us eight years in our Real Estate business, and they are both very dear friends.

Bob was such a help to me when I printed your First Edition, and I have done my best to do this one so that you will be proud of it. I have enjoyed our many years of friendship and our business association.

This is my farewell printing job in Palmdale. As you know, I have sold my printing business and am moving out of the state. Palmdale has been good to me, and I still love it; but I feel that I want to make a complete change in life-style. So, thanks again for all of your help and consideration, and I hope this article is what you had in mind.

Your friend,
Vickie Maris
Vickie Maris

SALUTE TO ROBERT D. MARIS
Submitted by
Dixie N. Chaney (Mrs. Jack S. Chaney)

When Robert D. (Bob) Maris came to Palmdale in 1956 he brought with him not only his pretty and vivacious wife, Vickie, but an impressive background in organizational experience. While employed with the Pacific Electric Railroad Company for 30 years, he became an organizer for the Brotherhood of Railroad Trainmen. He was president of the Agua Dulce Civic Association for two terms. He helped organize the Mint Canyon Chamber of Commerce and served as Charter secretary of that organization.

This experience served him in good stead in Palmdale. As a Realtor he could use this expertise after he was appointed to serve as a member of the Planning Commission when in October 1970 it was formed as an entity separate from the Palmdale City Council. In May, 1972, he was elected chairman of the Commission. During his service on the Planning Commission Bob Maris drafted and submitted to the City Council several ordinances which were subsequently adopted by that body. Among these were the Development Program (DP) zoning ordinance (designed to end speculative zoning) and the billboard ordinance.

Bob took a deep, personal interest in Palmdale in particular and the Antelope Valley in general. He was no sideline spectator - he participated. He presented ideas; he made suggestions; he commented articulately on whatever affected the general welfare of our community. Bob attended City Council meetings with astounding regularity. In fact, according to his widow, Vickie, he only missed one meeting and that was due to the fact that he was at her bedside while she was hospitalized.

Robert Maris relished the lively scene of civic government so much that he waged three unsuccessful campaigns to become elected to a seat on the City Council. These defeats did not dampen his enthusiasm one whit as he continued his efforts to serve his city. He believed that Palmdale and the Antelope

Valley have a great future, and he worked long and hard to help attain that goal. One of his accomplishments was the major part he played in the shaping of the Los Angeles County Minor Land Law. The Supervisors of Kern County were so impressed with it that they invited Bob to appear before them for a discussion as to how it could be adapted to the problems facing their County.

Bob wore many hats during his life in Palmdale: In 1967 he served as president of the Palmdale Board of Realtors; he twice served as Worthy Patron of the Star of Palmdale Chapter OES (in 1964 with Vickie and in 1968 with Frances Harrison). He was a member of the Palmdale Masonic Lodge No. 769 and the Royal Arch Chapter, serving as its Charter Chaplain. When the Palmdale Masonic Lodge was heroically attempting to build their Temple, Bob donated his services to survey the land on which the Temple is located. He was personally responsible in obtaining as a gift the acre of land adjacent to the Temple property, and a cash donation of $1,000.

It is difficult in a chronicle of this type not to eulogize a man such as Robert D. Maris. As Rev. Eubanks said during the funeral services for Bob on July 24, 1972, Maris was a "tryer, and an accomplisher who devoted his life toward working for his fellow man". . . and we would like to add to that . . . "and the community in which he lived." In closing we would like to quote from an editorial which appeared on July 23, 1972, in our local newspaper, The Antelope Valley Press:

> "Professional reportorial practice precludes using flattering adjectives in factual stories, but such comment is appropriate in an editorial. Posthumously, we salute the "erudite, articulate, brilliant" man who served this community ardently and well. . .

Robert D. Maris

Born Sept. 22, 1905 - Died July 20, 1972

Pic. taken in the Spring of '72
L. - R. Jack Chaney, Realtor
Bob Maris, Chrm. Plmd. Planning Commission
Warren M. Dorn, Supervisor of the 5th Dist.

2 VALLEY PRESS Thursday, November 17, 1955

Old Timer Recalls Palmdale History

by Myrtle Breslin

After having written last week's article about Old Palmdale I was lucky in being able to interview Nestor A. Young Jr. who lived at Harold in 1887.

At that time Dr. J. J. Peckham was Postmaster at Harold. The doctor had come to this valley for his health. Previously he had come to San Diego from Boston for his health, which did not improve in the San Diego country, so he came here in 1887.

Nestor A. Young was a friend of the doctor and his wife in San Diego, so he came here with them and worked in the Post Office with the doctor. As they had all the mail to sort for all of the south side of the valley, and deliver it, there was a lot of work to be done. Nestor brought the bags of mail from the railroad and delivered them to the railroad. The train did not stop, but threw the bags off from the moving train, so when the postal clerk aboard the train threw the bags off, he would try to knock Nestor down. Nestor tried to do the same to the postal clerk on the train. That was one way to have fun, for no matter how rugged the going, we must have our fun.

After the mail was sorted they delivered it by horseback, first to Old Palmdale, then to Littlerock, Valyermo and on up to the Big Horn mine.

At that time there were no houses or privately owned land between Harold and Lancaster. About half way between the two towns there was a passing switch for trains, but no buildings. That must have been Dennis, which I think is still a siding for trains to pass.

The section boss for the Southern Pacific Railroad lived at Harold with the boss who had charge of the section from Harold to Vincent, and each had a working crew of from eight to ten Chinese men, and all the railroad laborers lived at Harold in railroad houses at the side of the track. Some of those houses were still there when we came here in 1921, also the water tank, for the railroad was getting the water for the engines at Harold for several years after we came. There was also a freight house and station agent there.

The man who owned the principal saloon in Harold was Gus Rinkenbacker. In the winter of 1888 and '89 Rinkenbacker filed a homestead claim on 160 acres of land, which now forms a part of Palmdale. He built a small shack, about 8x8 feet, which was located about 200 feet west of the railroad tracks near where the ice plant is now, one Ave. R (that is where the old gypsum plant used to stand.)

So when the present Palmdale townsite was laid out, it grew quite rapidly because Harold and Old Palmdale moved into the present Palmdale.

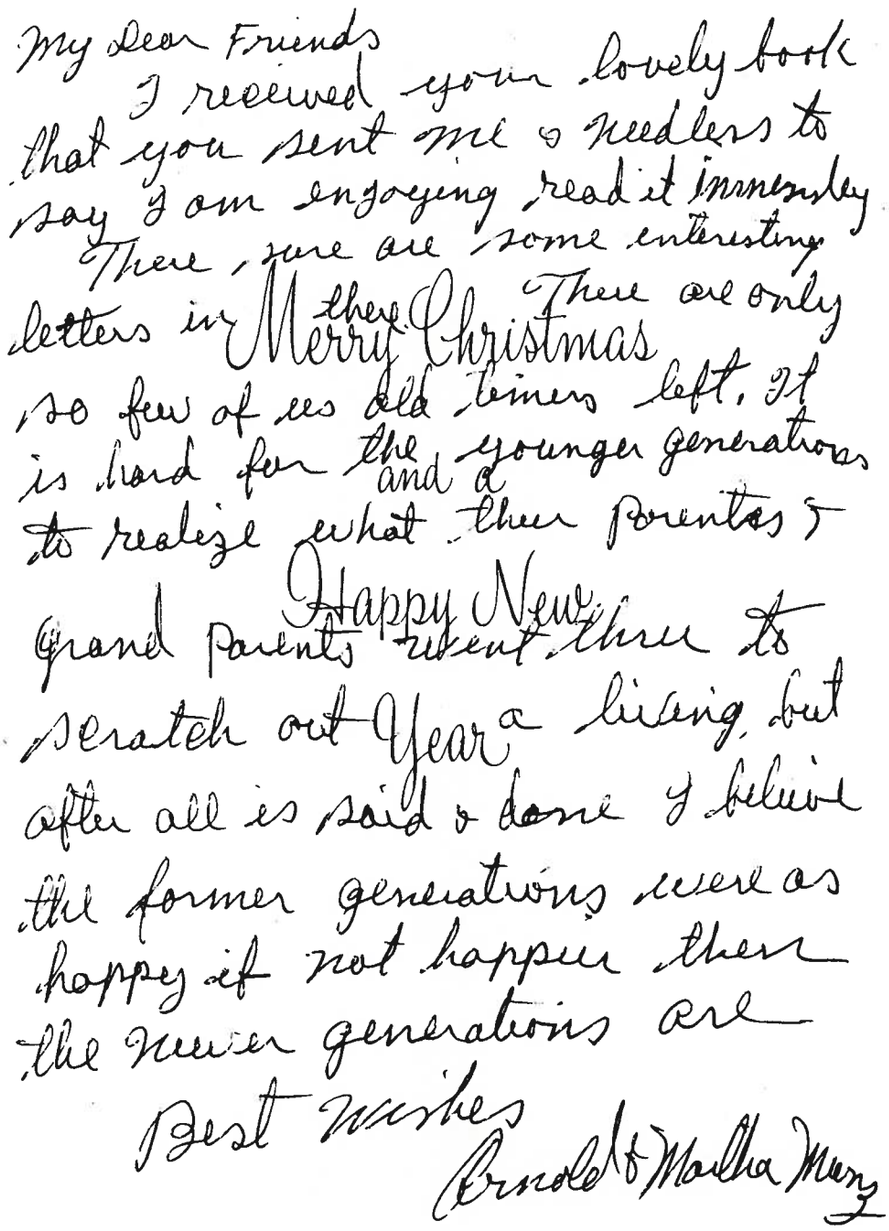
During the early days of Antelope Valley and up to about the early Nineties the two Newhall brothers (who owned the Newhall Land Grant surrounding the present town of Newhall) for many years ran thousands of cattle all over Antelope Valley. They had their headquarters located on the west branch of the Big Rock Creek.

In 1889 Mr. Young had dinner with them at their main camp.

In the winter of 1888 - '89 there were very heavy rains, and several miles of the Southern Pacific railroad tracks and tunnels washed out in the Soledad Canyon, and the trains did not run for a couple of months. The mail was brought in on horseback.

My thanks to Mr. Young for all this information about Palmdale and surrounding country. There is much more to come in regards to Barrel Springs, Indian camps, and the finding of Indian Culture here in this district.

* *


My dear Friends
I received your lovely book
that you sent me & needless to
say I am engoying read it immensley
There are some interesting
letters in there. There are only
so few of us old timers left. It
is hard for the younger generations
to realize what their parents &
grand parents went thru to
scratch out a living, but
after all is said & done I believe
the former generations were as
happy if not happier than
the newer generations are
Merry Christmas
and a
Happy New
Year
Best wishes
Arnold & Martha Marz

STORY OF WILSONA

by

Ed and Phebe Ogden

April 9, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Due to ill health in the family the Ogdens arrived in the Wilsona Valley 1:30 A.M. of June, 1935. All six of us sleepy and in a very strange place, 230th Street East and E. Avenue R - way out, and called Black Butte Road.

It was not easy at that time to obtain work, but several children were in school and we had to manage. The children loved their school and it finally was their main place of entertainment. After Mr. Ogden was appointed on the School Board, the community decided to have get-togethers twice a month. Our little school had song fests, games and dancing, and of course plenty of good cakes. Square dancing was new to us, but the old and the young taught each other. Later many dances were held and the money donated helped build the octogon shaped dance floor, which was later turned into an extra classroom. Mr. Ogden served twelve years on the school board.

In 1941 Muroc Base, now Edwards, was started and many more had work. (Twenty-two years for us.) We built our home on 80 acres, at 220th Street East and Avenue O. You might say we had a pet farm, all but horses. After 25 years we built our retirement home at 92nd Street East, Lancaster.

There are so many new faces in the Valley, we seldom see those of 38 years ago.

Sincerely,

Ed and Phebe Ogden
44519 North 92nd Street East
Lancaster, California

* *

Thank You for your thoughtfulness.
Although these words cannot
fully express our thanks.
We trust you'll understand
the gratitude behind them.
Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters
& Reminiscences will be placed
in our library. Thank you so much.
Palmdale Woman's Club

THE DAN LEDBETTER STORY

April 10, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Nixon and three daughters, Gladys, Bessie and Pearl came out to Antelope Valley from Eagle Rock and homesteaded 320 acres at 170th Street East and Avenue S, Section 34, Township 6 North Range 9 West, in 1921. There was no school bus transportation from Llano at that time and children attending Antelope Valley High School had to come into Longview (name of street now) to Pearblossom, known now as Pearblossom Highway, on Highway 138 - at that time it was called the Llano Road. It was not paved until 1925. In 1921 it was a dirt road all the way to Palmdale. There was a dirt road from Longview known as Longview (no name 1921) to Love Joy Springs, called the Lone Oak Road, because there was only one lone oak tree on it. The oak tree was around what is now known as 140th street East and Avenue S-8.

My mother and step-father, Sarah and Ben Stevens and myself came out here in 1922, at the Los Angeles County line - Section 25 Township 5, North Range 8 West, and homesteaded 180 acres. I was at that time a Deputy Sheriff from Los Angeles County and I was driving the road camps. My duties were transporting prisoners and supplies back and forth from Los Angeles. The prisoners were working at building the roads from the Socialist Colony Saw Mill to Big Pines Park. The sawmill was two or three miles east of what is now known as Mile High, which at that time was the end of the road. We moved the road camp several times from years 1922 to 1927.

In 1926 I married Bessie Nixon. I went into the trucking business in Glendale in the year of 1928. We came back to Wilsona June 1st, 1931, and went into cattle ranching and later on, to alfalfa ranching too. We had three daughters and one son, Rodger, Lydia, Sally and Bessie Ann. In 1934 the school bus picked the children up at 170th Street East and Avenue S at 7 A.M. to take them to Wilsona School. My wife Bessie passed away December of 1958.

I am now living on Longview Road in Pearblossom.

Sincerely,

Dan Ledbetter
33430 Longview Road
Pearblossom, California

STORY BY ROBERTA MEYER ALEXANDER and PEGGY MEYER GEARLLACH

April 10, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Our father and mother, Edgar J. and Nellie E. Meyer homesteaded in 1934, on East Avenue J and 170th Street. Our property was bought by the state for Joshua State Park. Recently they have re-named the park to "Saddle Back State Park". There were three of us girls, Peggy, Betty and Roberta. We all attended Wilsona School which was a one room school with all eight grades together and one teacher. The bus driver, Elmer Hibbard, owned his own bus. All east of Avenue J was a dirt road. My grandfather lived with us, and my father worked in Los Angeles. He came home on weekends. He would haul water for us from a windmill at the school. We used a wood stove to cook on, and to heat with, and we had kerosene lamps.

We moved to the Roosevelt District and farmed until 1941. We moved back to the Wilsona District in 1941. We then went into the cattle ranching business as our father gave up his position in Los Angeles in 1941. We three girls then attended Antelope Valley High School in Lancaster. At that time A.V. High School and Jr. College was all together. Even students came from Kern County to our high school and junior college, as that was the only high school for all the valley, (now we have five high schools) and some of Kern County, which adjoins Los Angeles County, took in Rosamond, Edwards, etc.

In 1941 we still did not have electricity in the Wilsona area. We bought a ranch at 230th Street East and Avenue R, so we still had to use kerosene lamps and an ice box, and we still had to haul ice from Palmdale. We had to have our own transportation to Avenue Q to meet the high school bus, when we could make it. The roads were still only wagon track roads, and when it rained or snowed we could not travel on them. Palmdale Blvd. was only opened to 180th Street East. It is now opened to 240th Street East. The high school bus did not come further than East Ave. O and 240th Street. Mrs. Emily Scofield worked with the group trying to get electricity out in Wilsona. She was secretary to Rural Electric Association, better known as R.E.A. We finally got electricity as Southern California Edison bought us out and served every one in the community.

We both, Peggy and I, and our children are still living in Wilsona Valley and our sister Betty, is living in Lancaster. We both married and our sons attended, or are attending Wilsona School and Antelope Valley High School and College.

Sincerely,

Mrs. Roberta Meyer Alexander
38227 North 230th Street East
Lancaster, California 93534

Mrs. Peggy Meyer Gearllach
21053 East Avenue R-8
Lancaster, California 93534

A WILSONA STORY BY MRS. JOHN SYLVIES

April 10, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I don't believe John and I can be called real old timers, as we didn't move to the Valley until December, 1947.

Our boy Roy was eight years old and Johnny was six at that time. We enrolled them in Wilsona School, bringing the one room school house enrollment to thirty pupils for all eight grades. The school bus in those days picked up the children at the house about seven A.M.

The mail boxes were located at East Avenue O and 180th Street East. Fortunately, Mrs. Emily Scofield, our neighbor, worked in Lancaster, and she picked up our mail for us. It was seven and one half miles to our mail box. At that time it was just a zig zag trail from our place to 200th Street East and Palmdale Blvd. Palmdale Blvd. had only been opened through to 240th Street East for a short ime, and before that 180th Street East was the end of the pavement. This end of the desert was full of zig zag trails from one home to another.

Our original part of the house was built out of car stakes, sturdy, but not much to look at. It took us years to finish the interior. Mr. Merle Scofield helped us with the building and wiring of our place. We were six months getting butane and it was one year until we had electricity. The nearest telephone was in a booth just outside the school yard, which was ten miles. It was an old crank type telephone. Our calls went through the San Bernardino office or Exchange first before we could call either Palmdale or Lancaster numbers, and both were and still are long distance calls. The people of Wilsona and the Wilsona Improvement Association worked, or tried for years to get telephones in our district, and we do have them now, though they are eight party lines.

Even at this time (1947) we used the well known "desert cooler" to keep our food, as it was too far to drive to Pearblossom for ice.

In those days, this end of the Valley was full of wild flowers, such as Lupin, Verbena, Primrose and masses of beautiful wild flowers too numerous to mention by name.

Just recently we were told this is the end of the earth. We feel there is not a more peaceful and tranquil place to be found.

My husband had a small machine shop in back of our place from 1951 to 1960, and he employed six people. They made small airplane parts and delivered them to companies in Los Angeles.

It doesn't seem fair not to mention our second family. Peggy and Becky have graduated from Wilsona School and are attending Antelope Valley High School, and our youngest son Timothy, age ten years, is still attending Wilsona School. Our two older sons are both Sheriffs for Los Angeles County.

Sincerely,

Mrs. John Sylvies
37500 North 215th Street East
Lancaster, California

THE EMILY SCOFIELD STORY

April 8th, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I, Emily E. Scofield, was born in Sawyers Bar, Siskiyou County, California. My parents were real pioneers of California. They came out in a covered wagon from Texas in 1897, with my brother Clyde, age 22 months and my sister Lydia, age 10 days old when they started. It took them over two years to get to Northern California. My mother told me they hailed down passenger trains many times for water on their way to California. They later settled in Los Angeles, California.

When my husband, Merle, our two sons and I moved to Antelope Valley, Wilsona District, we, too "pioneered". We were owners of courts in Los Angeles and we also had a lovely home there, all modern, etc. We moved some of our furnishings and personals with our cars and a rental trailer. We had our piano, electric refrigerator, electric stove, etc., on the trailers. Mr. Ayrid, from Wilsona, who used to live at 260 Street East and Ave. P - Los Angeles County line, hauled the other furniture in a large moving truck. We came over such bad and terrible roads, we cut across the desert at the turn of the road, (now Highway 138), at Llano, cutting across the desert in the middle of July (that was the only road we knew at that time), towards the Black Butte to our ranch. We had a couple of flat tires and we had to walk the rest of the way to our place. By that time it was getting dark. We slept out of doors on the ground, because it was now dark, and we didn't want to go in the house because the doors had been taken off or blown off since we were there last, and range cattle had gotten inside and were using it for shade, etc. It was really an experience for the children and me; we saw lizards, snakes, etc. Some of the lizards were quite large and horny looking; also barn owls, coyotes, etc.

It was so "hot" -- there were not any trees or shade. There was a well with a windmill on it, but no wind. We found out later that our ranch had been used as a watering hole for the range cattle and the cattle had taken the place over. The truck with the balance of our furniture didn't get there until early in the morning. We left our furniture out in the yard all summer while my husband and sons made the house liveable again. We also slept out of doors all summer. (The stars were beautiful at night and the air was so fresh and clean.)

My husband was still running our business, the "J.S. Torrence Leather Co.," so he could only come out to the ranch on week ends. We did not have any electricity, telephones, plumbing or water in our house. The windmill on the well wouldn't work half the time and we had to haul water from Mr. Hibbard's ranch, which was about eight miles, for drinking, cooking and watering our stock. Our sons had a saddle pony. We bought a dairy cow from a rancher on the West Side and our sons and I did not know how to milk it. Eddie Meyers, a neighbor at that time, came over and showed them. Perry Barnett (he was on the Wilsona Board of Trustees) and Neil Obee, both neighbors of ours (eight to ten miles away), helped us when we needed it during the week. It kept my husband very busy repairing, etc., all he had time to do on the week ends. My sons and I really went "wild". We had bought cows, calves, horses, a burro, goats, pigs, turkeys, chickens, rabbits, guinea hens, peacocks, and, of course, dogs and cats.

When I was a child my parents had a small ranch, also my uncles and aunts in Texas had cattle ranches and chicken ranches, but our sons grew up in town where we could not have animals and they "loved this wide open country". My husband installed a pump jack and a gasoline engine on our well, after he had it cleaned out by a well driller, and piped water into our house. My husband, Merle, sold our business in Los Angeles, and we also sold our courts in Los Angeles. We then went full time into cattle ranching. We fixed up the barns, corrals, put in good watering troughs and feed troughs, a loading shute, etc.

We planted lots of trees for shade, fruit trees, shrubs and flowers. Later we planted permanent pasture and barley. We put in a sprinkling system (portable). He added more rooms to our house, wired it for electricity and made it very comfortable and nice. He also built a large garage and work shop with a rumpus room above it, and a small separate building we used for a pantry and storage for our supplies and canned fruit, etc.

In the meantime, all the people in the community that didn't have electricity, we all signed up with R.E.A., Rural Electric Association. I was secretary on the Board - Tom Buchanan from Llano, Myrlin Card from High Vista, and I from Wilsona; I do not just now remember all their names, but we had representatives from all over the Valley, who didn't have electricity. Phelan, Apple Valley, Hesperia, Pinon Hills, El Mirage, and even some in Rosamond and from the rural areas east of Lancaster and Palmdale. We were doing real good, started setting poles, etc., when Southern California Edison came in and bought us out. They served most every one on our original petition. They also refunded to each of us our membership fee.

I was Deputy Registrar of Voters, Notary Public, Secretary to the School Board of Trustees of Antelope Valley, member and clerk of the Wilsona School Board of Trustees, President of Wilsona School Board of Trustees, Director on the Wilsona Improvement Association and authorized agent for the construction of our new school building in 1952. During our years in the Antelope Valley, we took care of many children, both to help the children and to help keep up the enrollment of the Wilsona School. Before being elected on the Wilsona School Board of Trustees I worked several years as Secretary for them.

I took many trips to Sacramento before we got the approval for money to build a new school. Julien Beck was our Assemblyman at that time and he helped us very much in Sacramento.

On June 9th, 1947, our home was completely destroyed by fire. We lost everything except the clothes we were wearing, lost all the buildings except our barn. Our cattle were safe because they were on the pasture or out on the range. I lost a Stradivarius violin and several other very valuable and old violins (our two sons also played the violin), all our music, piano any my husband's tenor banjo, too. I was at the school picnic and Mr. Clarence Shetler met me before we got home and told me. I went into shock and was taken to the hospital. My husband was at a neighbor's. Our son Merle was in the U.S. Navy, son Bill in college and Alfred, a boy we raised since he was around seven years old, was with me at the school picnic. When I came home from the hospital, our wonderful neighbors and friends from all over Antelope Valley, also from Los Angeles and Sunland, had gathered up furniture, groceries and even money to help us rebuild our home. We always knew that all our worldly possessions really meant nothing without friends, but when we lost everything, it really did prove itself to be true. We will never forget any one of them.

So we started all over again -- we were so thankful for all our wonderful friends and were so thankful that none of us, or anyone, lost their lives in the fire, that rebuilding our home again was much easier than our first time.

In January 1945, I went to work for Los Angeles County Assessor's Office. John R. Quinn was the County Assessor; Cliff Moore was the Assistant Assessor, and Charles Bon Eske was head of our personal property division in Los Angeles. They would come out to see and help us during the assessment season. I was Deputy Assessor Appraiser and was the only Deputy Appraiser in the personal property division in Antelope Valley then, which took in everything north of the mountains, Saugus, Newhall, Crystal Lake, in the San Gabriel Mountain, etc. -

an area nearly half of Los Angeles County. The boundary lines were Ventura County, Kern County and San Bernardino County. I had many interesting experiences during the 23 years I worked for the Assessor, and I will tell you a few.

My first year was the most difficult. All the people in all of the Antelope Valley were and still are some of the most wonderful and friendly people I have ever known, and I enjoyed working for them very much and will never forget them. I was the first lady Deputy Appraiser in the Valley. Mr. Mays from Lancaster was the Appraiser of the property at that time. Mr. Martin from Littlerock and Mr. Cagney from Lancaster were Deputies just before me. I remember one evening I went to one of the East Side ranchers to take his statement. There were several other ranchers there and they were having dinner. I do not think (at that time) they approved of a lady appraiser; and they were very uncooperative. I introduced myself and explained why I was there and apologized for being so late. They laughingly and jokingly said, "You are the appraiser, you go and look things over and tell us." (They really put me through a third degree.) It was getting dark, so I took my flash light and looked all over the ranch. Besides their home, they also had hay and ranch equipment and livestock. I made my appraisal and asked the owner to please sign it -- I think they really were surprised that I was capable of appraising it. I was very determined to prove my capability and to be very honest and fair with them. He signed my statement and I never had any one else from then on question me or my appraisals.

One time I remember so well, Harry Lewis, one of my Director Deputies, and I were appraising property out near Gorman and it was getting dark. To save mileage and to complete the assessment season on time, we worked long hours. We stopped by one of the West Side ranches, I left my car lights on and went and knocked on the door. No one answered, but someone outside called and said, "Who is there?" I stepped out in front of my car lights so they could see me. It was one of the cattle ranchers and he had a rifle pointed at me. Of course, when I introduced myself and Mr. Lewis everything was all right. He told us they had lost several head of cattle and the ranchers were taking turns at night to try to catch the cattle rustlers. From then on I made it a point that none of my deputies would work after dark, including myself.

Another time, this was in the day time, before twelve A.M., I was appraising a rancher on the East Side, and when I came back to my car (I was driving a Model A Ford Coupe - it was fixed up real nice - upholstering, etc.) it was full of goats. They had stripped my car pretty clean, even ate my lunch - it was a sight!

Another time I was assessing out on the range country out of Gorman and I drove miles out among the barley fields (when I called at the ranch they told me I could see the owner out where the cattle were ranging) so I went out to the range where the cattle were ranging. I saw the rancher on one of the roads and I was on another road, and by the time I tried to follow him my car stopped running - I was not sure if it was out of gasoline or what. More likely, it was vapor locked. I walked a few miles to a cabin. No one was there, so I walked back to my car and got some tools and went back to the cabin; I took the copper tubing off a gasoline engine, then I walked another mile or two out across the barley field to some of the ranch equipment, siphoned gasoline out of the tank and walked back to the cabin and put the copper tubing back on the gas engine. I walked back to my car another couple of miles and put the gasoline in it. I thought for a while I would have to break in the cabin and spend the night - because it was very cold, too. Of course, during my walking I heard the rattle of rattlesnakes, etc. I carried my shovel and a flash light with me, as it was getting dark by this time. My car started up, to my surprise (and was I glad), and I went back into the town of Gorman and phoned my husband and told him where I was, etc. It wad nearly 80 miles to my home, so I stayed all night at the Ralph's Motel in Gorman.

In 1947 I also worked on the Board of Equalization in Los Angeles.

As the years went by, each year we put on more deputies to keep up with the growth of the Antelope Valley. A few years later, at the peak of the season, I had 39 deputies and clerks under my supervision, besides being in charge of the full time Lancaster Branch office of the Assessor and the Palmdale office - Palmdale office open one or two days a week. We first had a part time office in the Jury Room of the Court House (when it wasn't being used). William "Bill" Keller was Judge and he was wonderful in helping us in many ways. It was such a pleasure to have him at our beck and call at all times - I shall never forget him as many, many more people will never forget him, too, in Antelope Valley.

I retired June 28th, 1968. They gave me one of the most wonderful retirement dinner parties I have ever seen. There were several hundred friends there from all over the Antelope Valley and also from Los Angeles County. Mr. and Mrs. John R. Quinn sent me three dozen beautiful red roses.

Philip E. Watson, Assessor of Los Angeles County, sent me a telegram from New York. This is what it said:

> CONGRATULATIONS. SORRY TO BE MISSING TONIGHT. IF REWARDS ARE GIVEN FOR LOYALTY AND DEVOTION YOU ARE NUMBER ONE. I HEREBY NAME YOU "ASSESSOR EMERITUS" OF THE ANTELOPE VALLEY.
>
> PHIL WATSON

They gave me many gifts, a diamond wrist watch, life membership in the Los Angeles County Employee's Association, certificate from the Board of Supervisors, and many, many more too numerous to name.

In June of 1972 our children had a reception for us in celebration of our 50th wedding anniversary. It, too, was a wonderful reception. There were several hundred people there; they came from all over the Antelope Valley, Los Angeles, Palm Springs, Desert Hot Springs, San Diego and Northern California.

My husband, Merle, and I have so much to be thankful for. Here is a poem written by Mrs. Bertha Denton that we love so much.

HIS WORD OF LOVE

I cannot thank thee, Lord, enough
  for the good things that are mine;
I cannot thank thee, Lord, enough
  for thy many gifts divine.
So bless, dear Lord, our fellowship,
  and the prayers that our lips say;
And help us spread thy holy word
  of love to the world each day.

The following was written by Benjamin Franklin, American Statesman, Diplomat, Scientist, Inventor, and Author:

A good newspaper and Bible
  in every house, a good
Schoolhouse in every district,

and a church in every
Neighborhood, all appreciated
as they deserve, are the chief
Support of Virtue, Morality,
Civil Liberty and Religion.

Very sincerely,

Emily E. Scofield
21413 East Avenue S
P.O. Box 1897
Lancaster, California

STORY BY E. W. MARTIN
Littlerock, California

In 1860 prospectors were prospecting out by Love Joy Springs Buttes. John Hancock built a large tunnel in Big Rock about this time. George Gleason and a boy had a fight with the Indians in 1860 and Tex, the boy, was shot. They took him on a horse to a mining camp and he lived until about thirty years afterwards.

Old timers from Elmadena would ask about this country as they rode through. Part of this country, where Nashes live (Palmdale Blvd. & 96th), used to be known as Wild Horse Prairie. There were wild horses there when we came here. John Mathis shot the last wild horse about seven miles north of Littlerock. Roney Crane caught a wild stallion and broke it to ride. They would ride in circles around the horses and others would come and get them. They would keep them away from the springs and keep them running until they would give out.

The first settler on Big Rock creek was L. C. Tillmans. The first settlement on the west side was Matthew Pallens. He had the place near Chases vinyard at Pearblossom. He had an orchard and vinyard that was seven years old, but he died about then, 1890. His orchard and vinyard are dried up now. Here at Littlerock Creek the first settler was Juan Garcia who lived by the hills at the old adobe and was buried up at San Gabriel Canyon at the present dam. The old adobe house was on the old stage line. There was another one at Barrel Springs. At Big Rock Creek there was an old adobe on the Valyermo Ranch. They dug a ditch in 1887.

Shoemakers' place had Indians on it. They farmed part of the ranch. A white man by the name of Saulsberry had a squaw wife and they called him the "squaw man" all the time. Shoemaker bought out these Indians in 1887. The last Indians left in 1891. They were east of Muscal creek.

There was an English Syndicate started to build a dam on Big Rock Creek in 1889 and 90, but the irrigation district was formed then and served an injunction and stopped the proceedings. Chinamen did the only labor on this dam.

There was a colony of Quakers out where Llano is now. I went there in the spring of 1890. Curtis, Syrus Baldwin, Paddock and Fraisure were some of the people in that colony. There were a few others too.

The first real settlers were Bent and Rowan. Bent was the father of the Bent brothers in Los Angeles. Bent sold out to the Coal brothers of St. Louis. There was Nathan Coal, Junior, Richard and Doctor Coal. Doctor Coal and Dick Coal sold their interest to Billings in Los Angeles, who took it over.

They formed the Littlerock Creek Irrigation District in 1892. They built the barn that is in my yard in 1888 (it was caved in in 1932 by a big snow storm.) It was known as the Coal Ranch. This house that I am living in was built in 1894 by Billings. The first real colony of this place was principally in 1893. That is when we moved here from Big Rock Creek, and we are the only family that stayed straight through. In January it will be thirty-seven years. (1930). We are still here. (1955) We were one year at Llano and one year on the Shoemaker Ranch where Pallet is now.

The next colony was the Sweet & Wilson Colony. It was started in 1893 and composed of Iowa, Illinois and Kansas families chiefly. They had come to know this place because it was advertised in the Farm & Fire Side magazine. The old cement house in Long View near the Phillips Place was built thirty years ago by Carter (1900).

There were lots of cattle ranches in this country. We had lots more rain and water during those years. Littlerock was named after the creek it was by that from the early settlers that drove through. They would also ask about the big meadows, meaning Big Rock.

The first Post Office in Littlerock was in 1893. There has been one continuously since that time. The first post office in Llano was in 1890, and it has been there continuously. Before that the settlers would carry the mail themselves, two or three times a week. The next post office was built in Myrtle on the Carter ranch. Afterward it was known as Almondale. They had quite a little town there, three stores and a black smith shop. The present site is known as the Hammond ranch. There was a settlement of about two hundred people there in 1894. The adobe in Littlerock was built by Juan Garcia who was killed by a bear in the 70's in Santiago Canyon, by the dam. He wounded the bear and looked for him the next day. Garcia crawled in the brush and then the bear killed him. The last bear that I know of was killed by George Miller in San Bernardino in 1900. The Post office when we came here was in Harold known as Alpine Springs. The old settlement of Palmdale was started near the John Boyle place. The present Post office at Valyermo was known as Shoemaker, and it was started when the Big Horn mine was working. The school house was built in 1895. They only had about six weeks of school and that was in summer.

The meaning of Llano is Plains. It is a Spanish word. The Colony started up in 1914 and commenced to break up in 1918. The Quaker colony only lasted three years. They came in from Orange. Then there was a few different ones came in and joined in on Llano. First one and then another came and went. The Kidd family came there in the fall of 1891. There was Herbert, Emery and a sister. The school was opened in the fall of 1891. There were about ten scholars. The second period was when the Sweet and Wilson colony came in about 1896. Then they had three years of continuous drought that drove people out. At the same time there was a colony started up at Muscal Creek known as the Graham colony. The Socialist colony was the third and largest of all. At one time there were about two thousand people living there. I have seen forty-five students in the Almondale school when it was at its highest. They got their water from Big Rock Creek, and there has always been arguments over the water cropping out every little while. The people raised some stock and some hay, then they would live up the income they would have and then get up and leave. Here in Littlerock we had orchards and we kept on working continually. We had smaller orchards and a steady run. Littlerock was first started with almond trees, and then pear trees were put in because the almond trees were not successful. We sold the first ton of pears to Ludwig and Mathis. They were the first shipped out of Antelope Valley. 1901. We had heard of Littlerock through the Quaker colony at Alameda, two miles from Orange County.

When we came here first we stayed on the Shoemaker ranch, but he was in difficulty with the water proposition so we left and there was an opening here for contracts to clear out orchards and clear land with Coal. There were six or eight people when we moved here in 1893. The oldest pear trees were planted in the last of February and March of 1893 and they are still bearing (1930).

There was a stage that came through before the rail-road was constructed, and different adobes were stage stations. That was before I came here.

Littlerock got its supply of water from Littlerock creek and the Garcia Seaneca. The water supply diminished the later part of 1890. The heaviest flood I ever knew was in February 2nd, 1891. Tillman lost one horse and wagon loaded with goods. He got on the horse and rode it to shore the water was so deep. In 1910 the Mathis family went to bed and awoke to find water all over the house. They were forced to leave their place. (January 10, 1910. The canyon was not there until that time. They had three boats on the Pallet ranch.

They used to run many head of cattle through the Valley. The three Pallet brothers gathered 1400 head of cattle in one day.

The early settlers used to gather for the Fourth of July picnics. They would start on the third and go home of the fifth or sixth. They would have dances and camp out during the night.

There were quite a number of bears in the mountains and several mountain lions. Only rarely did the bears get down into the valley. Once in a while they would cross the valley and go to the far Nevadas, but seldom did they come nearer than Peffley Springs.

When the Indians cooked they would heat their stones in the fire and throw the stones in a basket and cook that way.

Lew Tillman had the first machine in the south side of the Valley in 1910. It was a two cylinder Auburn.

The first school organized here was in 1893, and it ran only for two or three years and was then discontinued. It did not start up again until ten or fifteen years later. There never were more than fifteen in the first school, and not more than eight or ten most of the time.

The first store here was in 1894, and the fellow had it a year or so and then left. It included dry goods and everything combined. They didn't have enough stock or money to run anything. The second store ran for two years until the drought. Then there wasn't a store until Lewis came in 1911. The people got good money from their crops for a while. Then almond prices were low, pears were transplanted and the pear market went down, and olives never did pay. Most of the people had a hard struggle to get along. The whole family would work in the harvest.

Where Jackson Lake is, near the County Park, they were raising potatoes when I came here. They raised lots of potatoes on the old Pallet ranch, too. Shoemaker raised alfalfa, kept cows and sold butter. Pugh homesteaded Noah Berry's Trout Club, and raised apples. He was there when we came here.

* *

December 1971

Dear Shelton and Viola:

Thanks, thanks for the book. I was thrilled when I saw it. Although I have not read it all yet due to pressure of things to do, I think it great.

I appreciate the time and energy you spent to compile it, for I know just what that entails.

Thanks again, and best wishes to all the Gordons.

Grace

THE STORY OF MR. AND MRS. STUCKEY
Lancaster, California

I came here in 1892 and Mr. Stuckey came in 1888. I came sixteen miles east of here. We went out the Sierra Madre road and settled out by those Buttes. We lived ten miles from Stories or six miles from Butterworth's old wind mill.

They had a school there at that time. Then Wineharts came. Everything is gone there now. There were a lot of stock men out there, and there were seventeen windmills. One family started a little ranch out there. They took up a homestead and couldn't do anything with the land, so they left. Wise people.

The cattle ranged out through the Wilsona district. We ranged two hundred cattle at that time. Butterworth and I worked together. The school was on the east side. Wineharts, Freur, and a lot of people came in for a little while. The John Brown colony was started out there. They started after we were here. There were quite a few people there when we came. There were forty at our house party. They located the people down in the flat for a little while. The colony was close to the Wilson & More. They didn't have the water to keep them there, though. We had to buy everything by the case, because it would take a whole day to come in to Lancaster. We would get sides of bacon and ham and cans of salmon and corned beef. We also made a lot of jerkey. You cut it then dip it in hot brine, and hang it on the wash line and dry it in the sun. Sometimes we canned our meat. We packed it in the jars and sealed it up tight. The round made the best jerkey. We did this in the summer because you could dry your meat then. The hot brine sears it.

I had to drive in by myself. I had a horse and buggy. We lived seven miles out. We lived two years in the Butterworth ranch. Then we lived at Pallets two years. We went up there about 1896. We raised potatoes there. Then we moved down to the brick house and we lived there for six years. We bought that place with a flowing well, one hundred and sixty acres of land and the brick house for $460.00, and we sold it for $2,000.00 and since then it has been sold for six to eight thousand. We sold out to the Sierra Madre people in 1902.

The school house was a cabin that someone had gone away and left. They had good soil out there. It is a sediment soil. I haven't been there for ten years. They pumped all the water out of the Buckhorn Spring. My idea is that there is a basin under it and they pumped all the water out. I bossed at the Spring in 1889, the first winter I came here. We ran pipe in that spring 40 feet. They flowed a stream of water of 25 inches. It was a big stream of water. There were little ponds all around it. There was another spring below it.

In the winter time some Tehachapi people brought down from five to seven or eight thousand head of cattle. They ran them all over the Valley. They rode them from the Mojave River down through Grape Vine. There were some fields around Elizabeth Lake. We had to go on a round-up. Some days there would be 150 head. Pallets had cattle up on the creek. There were cattle on the Mojave River and east of the river in the mountains. Harry Butterworth came in 1890. Up on Kern River there were a lot of cattle around the Kern Springs. In counting those brought down for the winter, I would say there were seven or eight thousand head. They had run cattle long before I came here.

Maya Frenchman lived up at Elizabeth Lake. Mrs. Maxwell ran cattle out there. They drove them to Los Angeles. Cattle were cheap when I came here. In the summer of 1889 I took my first bunch of cattle to Los Angeles. I think we had about four hundred head. We took them away down to the city. We fed them on beet tops. We watered our cattle in Los Angeles river by Universal City, then

we drove over the hill and there was an old hotel and saloon where the railroad tracks are on the right side of Hollywood Hill. Then we stopped to get a drink and drive down to Hollywood Hill and guard the cattle for the night. Down there they didn't seem to raise anything but a little celery, hay, and a few oranges.

When I first came here there were quite a few antelope out west. Near Indian Water there was a band of sixty antelopes. It is at the foot of the red-brown mountain east of Rosamond by Dry Lake. Then there was another band out around Muroc. I guess there were 75 or 80 in that bunch. Hitte bought a bunch of cattle off of Frakes and he had five tame antelope there. We had to keep the door shut to keep the antelope out, or they would eat the paper off the wall. They were as gentle as dogs. Frakes would catch them as little things. There were quite a few antelope out at the west end. The people killed them off. They used to kill them off for the hides and sell them. They ran in the mountains in the summer time and when it snowed in the mountains they came down into the valley.

The cattle watering places were Willow Springs, a spring north of Rosamond (3 or 4 miles) they used to call it Fredrick Springs, Indian water three miles east of Rosamond, Love Joy Springs and another spring west of Fairmont. Duharts still have cattle out at Fairmont. Munzes, Ritters, and the Roof brothers still have cattle.

Butterworth came in about 1889-90 and took up a homestead west of Rosamond about six miles. He lived on that homestead then he bought some land at Buck Horn. Butterworth bought his own cattle. He started with about 270 head. He made quite a bit of money. His wife had a lot of money. He sold out to the Sierra Madre people. We sold about 987 head, then I went about 16 miles north of Barstow.

The farmers and cattle raisers had quite a bit of trouble. They had to keep their cattle out and they started fencing their farms. Along about 1895-96 they started taking the cattle out of the west end. Harry used to run cattle north of Fairmont about 9 miles.

There were no Indians when I came here. They used to come down in back of Muroc and hunt antelope. I guess there would be 25 or 30. They camped along Little Lake. They had some holes they would fill up when the rains came along. Then there were some that would come down to work. They were peaceful, and very quiet.

A fellow out at the Buttes subdivided and he had put up a sign with George Town on it. He went back to Chicago and sold a lot of land back there, and one man came out inquiring for George Town, and nobody knew where it was.

RECOLLECTIONS OF M. STARK

An Impressive Story
of
Boyhood Days

I was born in Texas, but learned to talk in Antelope Valley, so I suppose that should make me at least an honorary native! In 1920 my grandparents, James and Mary Jane Ince, homesteaded in Wilsona between what is now the Indian Museum and Lovejoy Springs (Lake Los Angeles). With them, or shortly thereafter, came their son, Earl Ince and their daughters Mary (now Mary I. McPherson) Willa Ince, Oma Course, Lillian Perkins (and her husband Fred) and Charlotte and Wesley Stark (my parents) as well as a number of grandchildren.

Nearby lived the Allison McCaleb family who were cousins. Other families coming to the valley who shared some sort of relationship with the Ince girls were Hugh and Mamie Stark (brother of Wesley and sister of Fred Perkins) Gyan and Lulu Hobbs (sister of Fred Perkins) Jack and Pru Hill (sister of Fred Perkins) Chloe and Ernest Hagan (sister of Wesley Stark) and Blanche and Grant McFarland (granddaughter of James Ince). Almost all of these people had been born in Mills County, Texas, near the geographical center of that state.

My earliest memories of Wilsona are of the wind and the sand dunes, of the horse corrals built out of Joshua limbs which were wired together with bailing wire (because nails wouldn't hold) and of the kerosene lamps. In my pre-school days we moved about Antelope Valley as my dad got different jobs with various hay ranchers -- Asa Z. Wilson, the Earl Ranch, and George Lane were just a few. After a season of "skinning mules" with George Lane, he was invited to continue as a "mule skinner" with the Los Angeles County Road Department. He retired 32 years later as a tractor operator with all but six months of that service out of the Palmdale Road Department yards.

When I was six, we lived on Sierra Highway just north of Death Curve, and although the electric lines ran in front of the house, we weren't hooked up, so we had a wonderful Aladdin Lamp. That year I lived with my Aunt Mary (Mary McPherson) at 40th E and Avenue I, so that I could go to the Esperanza School at 70th Street West and Avenue G, where she taught. (As a school board member now, I could never go for that kind of inter-district transfer). My teacher for the first to the fourth grade was a memorable woman named Miss Baker (later Marie Baker Carter) who had the most perfect handwriting I have ever seen. I have strong positive memories of the smells of that classroom and the picture of "Old Ironsides" and George Washington and charts of the multiplication tables hanging on the walls.

After the first year in school my family, aunt and uncle, moved to Lancaster so I lived with my folks but was able to continue riding to school with my aunt in a 1926 Star Coupe -- I rode in the trunk. My aunt was my teacher in the fifth grade, after which we moved to Pearland where I entered the Palmdale Grammar School. We rented a house and barn and five acres of pear trees at the corner of 40th and Avenue S. We paid $10 rent per month to a Mr. Clark who lived in Los Angeles. He would visit occasionally and loved to tell stories about his being in the Cimarron land rush which opened up the Oklahoma Territory, and argue politics. Three years later we bought five acres with a house, garage and four brooder houses for $1500 on S-8, next door to Helen and Farrel Wykoff and just north of where Naomi Elliot (now Sheffield) lived.

I remember Pearland as green and beautiful. There were still many pear orchards left, but only a few people, such as the W.J. McAdams and the Kreigbaums with larger orchards, tried to take care of them and harvest the fruit to sell. Some people tore out the pear trees and planted alfalfa. Others

raised chickens or turkeys. Hardly anyone made a living off of only five acres, but most people had poultry, farm animals, and a garden. We had two cows, small calves, pigs and chickens. Water came from what appeared to be a very adequate community well. As I remember, we paid $3.15 per month for all of the water we could use. We flooded our lawns, irrigated our truck garden from an open ditch and flooded three acres of alfalfa for this amount.

In the summers, my friends and I would roam the foothills east of Barrel Springs Road, hike to the Littlerock Dam and play in the canal in which water flowed from the dam to the Palmdale Reservoir. Not one time do I ever recall seeing a rattlesnake. The most trouble we ever got into was being poisoned by eating the inside of a green yucca stalk.

I learned to drive a Model A Ford when I was 10 years old, not on the public highway but on the desert looking for firewood. At that time there were many dirt roads (no more than one car width wide with a high center) winding across the desert in all sorts of directions. They seemed to have been made by people (perhaps in wagons) trying to get somewhere by the shortest way but skirting natural obstacles such as sandbanks, gulleys, and clumps of Joshua trees. I would drive the car pulling a trailer while my dad walked from one fallen Joshua tree to another kicking out chunks of hardwood we called "petrified yucca" which made excellent fuel for our wood heating and cooking stoves. Other firewood we used was juniper trees. During the depression it was not uncommon for a deer to find its way under a load of wood coming out of the foothills. One winter my Uncle Earl Ince ran a trap line to catch coyotes and an occasional fox. As I recall, coyotes had a bounty of $1.50 on them and you could get about $5.00 for the pelt, so he did pretty good for that winter. Other people made a little extra money, at least during Prohibition, making illegal liquor.

During the summers, the last part of high school and in junior college, I picked pears for the Carrs in Littlerock to earn money for school. The wages seemed to vary from year to year, but I remember one year I made 30¢ an hour with a nickle bonus for staying the whole season. These were the days of the "fruit tramps". Whole families camped during pear season in makeshift shelters down on Littlerock Creek in a wasteland near where the ranches dumped their cull pears. They had usually started the season in Imperial Valley and worked their way north from one harvest to another. After pears they would be off to Bakersfield or Modesto or Lodi. One old man smoked chewing tobacco which he had pulverized and rolled in newspaper. Another favorite joke was, "Hey, I went to the doctor the other day and got a blood test."..."Yeah, so what happened?"..."Most amazed doctor you ever seen. Turned out to be 99% bean juice." Not all of them were poorly educated or from Oklahoma, Arkansas or Texas. One was an overage sea captain who could outwork men a third his age. Another man got fired for dragging his ladder only to make newspaper headlines a couple of weeks later as the long lost heir of a wealthy Philadelphia family. He had applied for a job which required fingerprinting and the FBI made the discovery.

Antelope Valley was a good place to live, even in those days. Although I suppose many of us would have like to live "down below". After trying it for about 15 years, I was only too glad to move back to the area. In fact, the best decision I have ever made in my life was to raise my family in Leona Valley away from the confusion of the city where they have had opportunities which they never could have had in Los Angeles.

THE STORY OF MRS. JOSEPH E. JOHNSON
Formerly Mr. Howard Mathew Forsythe
Lancaster, California

I came here in June of 1883. I settled close by Willow Springs, two and one half miles from it. We had a well we dug by hand. Two men dug twelve feet and we had a lot of water, which we pumped by hand. It was a handle pump. We were the only ones there at the time, and a little later the Marriotts came. He was a minister and later he went down to Ventura.

We raised vegetables and lovely potatoes with water from the pump. The handle of the pump was four feet long, and the higher we raised it the more water we had. There was a Scotch settlement up there. We were two and a half miles from them. The Scotch settlement came first. They came about 1882. There were Jeffrys, Louis, and Youngs. The place in which they resided is now called Esperanza. They came directly over from Scotland. They had heard of the place just as we had.

When we were leaving London to go through to New Orleans on the boat, someone gave us a pamphlet. We came from Birmingham, England. Mr. Wicks' pamphlet spoke of the valley as being a healthy locality. I came around France. I went up the Thames to Antwerp to Bordeaux and around to New Orleans. I left London the fourteenth of February and landed in Lancaster on the eighth of April, 1883. We wrote through the Maynard post office to some of these Scotch families.

I was weak when we arrived in Los Angeles. The doctor asked me if I did not know of any other place to go, and I told him about the pamphlet we got on the boat. He told me that was the very place to go.

There was a hotel at Haubrick's corner, at the north-west corner of Tenth Street and Antelope Ave., which burned down. It was called Anderson's Hotel. There was just a little store there then. We stayed at the hotel for a while and looked around for a month.

On Antelope Avenue between Tenth & Eleventh Streets there are little houses - two or three long low buildings. We rented one for a month or two until we took up a homestead. There was not a settlement at Willow Springs at that time. There were not many springs around.

I lived there two and a half years. I left it for a while then. I kept getting permits to stay away till just before I proved up. Then I proved up. Mariotts and McCalls were farming too. They had wells. While they were building they got water from us. None of these people are here now. I went to Del Sur later.

There were bands of wild horses while I lived there. They used to come to drink at my well. There were about twenty-five or thirty in a bunch. People tried to catch the colts, but they couldn't come within a mile of them. They had about sixteen inches of snow, but the first year we were there I was without a coat all year. It was only in later years that the cattle came. Wild horses just came from everywhere. The people just couldn't get near them. People would stay nights with me so they could catch the horses, but they were not successful.

We raised barley and wheat too, but our potatoes did the best. One morning my husband hoed up two bucket fulls of potatoes, so next Sunday when I looked the tops were still looking fine. Then we dug under and the rabbits had eaten them all. The rabbits came in flocks. We just got hundreds of them on moonlight nights. I saw lots of antelopes, but the biggest parade was in Del Sur. I have seen twenty or thirty at a time. They did not come every day. About

four or five miles north of my place we used to see coyotes coming. I saw them myself. There were only about fifteen. The people killed off all the antelope. They used to bring them into the hotel and sell them at $1.00 a carcass. Then in 1885 it took six weeks for the snow to dry off and they found lots of carcasses of antelope, they believe. So many of them died in that storm.

I went down to Del Sur about 1886. There were only a little store kept by Maynard, and two or three families. Quite a number of families had settled in the foothills. The families around Maynard and the foothills built the school. It lasted up until 1922 and then we built the other school that was burned down. The first school was built there in 1890 or 91. There were fourteen or fifteen school children there.

The Scotch families gradually starved out. They tried to raise just grain, but the soil was too heavey. Then they went into cattle, as the rains were good, and that is when the cattle came in - 1886-1888.

When Mr. Johnson passed away I moved from Del Sur to Lancaster in 1925.

Kidson, Bateman, and Burton started alfalfa ranches in Del Sur. They had a big reservoir, and it is on the north road. They did well with alfalfa. Mr. Schibler had the first store in Del Sur. The people got the church on the road when they were moving it, and they couldn't get it any further, so they sold it to two people, William Carter and some other man. They had a store, a Methodist church, and a saloon in those days. In every quarter section there was a family. That was in the nineties, when there was a boom. We used to have church in the school house after they moved the old church. A minister used to come up from Los Angeles.

When the dry years came many people moved away. At the time the first Valley bank started they used to tell the people they could have all the money they wanted. They would let it run another year and when the crop came in they would take it away from the people. The people had to mortgage their farms then. Then, too, many people speculated, but never came up and looked at the land. George Marigold's father had a lot of land. Henry Hart got his land in the same way. In good years Marigold had it all rented out. Dozens would come to Del Sur camp, stop at Neenach, and then come to Lancaster.

The children used to find Indian articles, such as earrings, beads, mortars etc. close by.

The railroad was built in 1876, and the last spike was driven at Lang. In 1882 the nearest post office was at Ravennal. Palmdale did not exist at that time.

The ranch known now as the Pallet Ranch was owned by a Central American by the name of Saulsberry, and the Valyermo Ranch was owned by O'Riley. An encampment of Piute Indians was located across the Big Rock Creek from the Valyermo Ranch. They were very superstitious. Once when some children were dying, an old Indian couple were accused of causing their death by witchcraft. The Indians were going to kill them but were stopped by Mr. Pallet's brother by telling them he would send for the soldiers. The old couple ran away, but he made the Indians bring them back.

Another band of Indians were located at the Mathews ranch.

The bandit who was reported to have infested the Littlerock Canyon, holding up emigrants, lived in the adobe hut in the canyon on the way to the present dam. This small hut is still standing.

"I REMEMBER WHEN----"

by

Barbara Gordon Turner

May, 1973

For years I've been telling my children to enjoy their "wide open spaces" 'cause one of these days they will be "remembering when...." As I sit down to write about a few of the things I remember, it is hard to believe that just a few years ago--- We were still living in Pasadena and Dad had bought 20 acres on Sierra Highway in Palmdale. Every so often we would get the urge to go to the desert. Mother would pack a lunch, Daddy would call Bill McAdam to "see if the wind was blowing" and then we'd head off for some sunshine. The 20 acres had many old olive trees and we would park ourselves in their shade. There was an old weir in one spot and one Sunday Daddy was telling us how, as a boy, he had put a bucket in the weir to get water for his horse--the bucket got stuck and plugged up the weir. Well, would you believe--yep, he put the bucket in the weir to get water for our dog Sheppie and it got stuck and plugged up the weir! He got down in the thing trying to get the bucket out--finally had to hunt up someone from the Irrigation District--what an impression we made that day!

A year later he bought forty acres up on the hillside overlooking the Palmdale Reservoir, and that is where we spent every weekend until we finally moved there in 1948. This was a fun old house. There was no electricity and it was an adventure for us every weekend. We hiked up the hills, over the hills, around the hills. To the lake and all over. There was an old wooden slough we followed and found a spring. We had uranium fever, gold fever--found all kinds of old claims and old diggings and old mines. There were quite a few deer and mountain lions and it wasn't unusual when hiking to startle a deer or two. The wildflowers were such a thrill in the spring, we hiked and trod ever so carefully on the gorgeous "carpet". We completely fell in love with our new surroundings. When someone asked us why we moved to that god-forsaken place, we just smiled and invited them up for the weekend. Many times it would thrash and blow and they'd leave us knowing we had lost our senses. On Monday morning the still and quiet beauty of our lovely paradise was back with us and we knew we were right--this was for us.

In 1950 Dad bought 640 acres from Dr. Leach. There was a house on it and Fred and I moved into it. At that time there were just the two houses "on the hill" -- Dad's and ours. We had the electricity run in from Avenue S, put in a bathroom and started remodeling. As our family grew it was a constant remodeling job -- take out another wall -- add on another room.

Whenever I'm delighted or discouraged over things, Daddy says, "Barbara, you're building memories." And so it is. Here are a few---

The Johnson Family had a dairy on Avenue S. Oh, that sweet smell of cows and fresh milk! They told us the snow could get up to the horses' bellies. We were sure they were exaggerating until one year -- yes, snow up to the horse's belly!

We would rent horses from Mel Courson and ride all day all over the hills. We finally bought two horses of our own. Every so often the horses would get out, heading for the valley. Fred would go after them and herd them home with an old Model A Ford.

The deer would come up in the yard at dusk for water. We would try to be so quiet and watch them, but a snap of the finger and they would be gone. There were hundreds of quail and rabbits coming in the yard in the evenings.

I guess the wildflowers through the years have thrilled me as much as anything. The poppies used to be so abundant along Palmdale Blvd. between Division and 10th West. On our hill the many varieties I've never been able to count. The only way to really enjoy them is to walk through this natural, fragrant wonderland.

There are many little things I miss -- the trips to the old drug store on Sierra Highway for a milk shake; the parade down Sierra Highway with the Sheriffs Posse looking so sharp and handsome; Gill Morse's grocery store; Jessie's Gift Shop (Jessie Sherman, so helpful getting me started in the craft business); the landing strip at Palmdale Blvd. and Sixth St. E. where I finally learned to take off and land (seems that was the important part); Clyde and Lorna Wallace and their "Toggery"; the fun times and good friends at the Community Church at Palmdale Blvd. and 9th St. East; battling the elements and the snow and mud on Avenue S before it was paved; going for a swim in the Palmdale Lake before it went dry; coming to Palmdale on the train from L.A. and getting off at the Palmdale Station on a cold windy night--scarey! These are just a few of the little things I remember. There are many things during 25 years that happen that we don't remember until some little thing will happen and a bell rings and then we "remember when".

Barbara G. Turner

The First Thanksgiving Proclamation

Issued by President George Washington

Whereas, it is the duty of all nations to acknowledge the providence of Almighty God, to obey His will, to be grateful for His benefits and humbly to implore His protection and favor; and

Whereas, both Houses of Congress have, by their joint committee, requested me "to recommend to the people of the United States a day of public thanksgiving and prayer, to be observed by acknowledging with grateful hearts the many and signal favors of Almighty God, especially by affording them an opportunity peacably to establish a form of government for their safety and happiness;"

Now, therefore, I do recommend and assign Thursday, the twenty-sixth day of November next to be devoted by the people of these States to the service of that great and glorious Being who is the beneficent author of all the good that was, that is, or that will be; that we may then all unite in rendering unto Him our service and humble thanks for His kind care and protection of the people of this country previous to their becoming a nation; for the signal and manifold mercies and the favorable interpositions of His providence in the course and conclusion of the late war; for the great degree of tranquility, union and plenty which we have since enjoyed; for the peaceable and rational manner in which we have been enabled to establish constitutions of government for our safety and happiness, and particularly the national one now lately instituted; for the civil and religious liberty with which we are blessed, and the means we have of acquiring and diffusing useful knowledge; and, in general, for all the great and various favors which He has been pleased to confer upon us.

And also that we may then unite in most humbly offering our prayers and supplications to the great Lord and Ruler of Nations, and beseech Him to pardon our national and other transgression, to enable us all, whether in public or private stations, to perform our several and relative duties properly and punctually; to render our National Government a blessing to all the people by constantly being a government of wise, just and constitutional laws, discreetly and faithfully executed and obeyed; to protect and guide all sovereigns and nations (especially such as have shown kindness to us), and to bless them with good governments, peace and concord; to promote the knowledge and practice of true religion and virtue, and the increase of science among them and us; and, generally, to grant unto all mankind such a degree of temporal prosperity as He alone knows to be best.

Given under my hand, at the city of New York, the third day of October, A.D. 1789.

G. WASHINGTON

A MOST INTERESTING STORY

by

Meryl Adams
P.O. Box 188
Acton, California

Edward Adams became a well driller at Acton in the 1920's mainly due to our cow, Bossie. It was not the first time that a cow had exerted influence on peoples' lives. Remember Mrs. O'Leary's cow in Chicago? Bossie was our first purchase at Acton.

When my dad moved my mother and me to Acton from Los Angeles on the last day of 1919, we had no water. There were a lot of other things we did not have also, but water seemed to be the first order of business. Dad had a tank wagon which he towed to the running stream in Soledad Canyon about one mile south west of Acton, and hand dipped with a bucket the water to fill the tank wagon. Upon arrival home with the full tank of water, what happened? Bossie drank most of it! So Dad decided to buy a well rig and get our own water. He did not want to spend the rest of his life hauling water for Bossie! He did spend the rest of his life being a well driller and was a good one. There are still many good wells which he drilled that are in use today.

There was an eighty foot hand dug well on the place, so Dad decided to see just what the earth composition was in that eighty feet down! He rigged up a platform and cable and windlass so that he could be lowered into the well. For power he commanded the services of my little mother and Grandfather Gillian! He took a lantern and a pick and Mother and Grandfather lowered him to the bottom of the well. The only ones who got nervous were the two using the windlass to hoist Dad out!

During the early well drilling years until 1929, I helped my dad by pumping the forge when he sharpened his tools. We still have the forge which makes a wonderful barbeque.

Francis Gage, son of California Governor Gage, leased the well on the southeast corner of Crown Valley Road and Sierra Highway from 1933 to 1941 where he operated a Gold Mining Stamp Mill. This well still serves water at the Adams Forest Oasis.

I attended the Soledad School in Acton which I entered as a fourth grade student in 1920. I graduated from the eighth grade in 1924 with Edith Newton and Caroline Fryer as my classmates. I am especially grateful to Miss Lena McClafflin, my seventh and eighth grade teacher, for her efficient organization and teaching ability. We learned to accept responsibility and to work for the grades we received. We prepared ourselves for trips to the recitation bench!

My mother, Gertrude Adams, was appointed librarian of the Acton Branch Library December 1, 1926, a position in which she served for twenty-one years. She was quartered in the 1890 Red Brick Soledad School for 12 years and in the present Acton School for nine years. She loved the children and was always cooperative with the teachers in securing book requests.

During the twenties and thirties and forties my mother was active in the many ladies clubs at Acton and always enjoyed the associations. She always said she gave up Club Going when they began to have too much business and too many minutes. In the fifties she took up weaving and had her own loom. She won many ribbons on her weaving entries at the Alfalfa Fair and Festival in Lancaster.

My dad was a member of the Acton School Board, having once been elected when there were a total of seven votes cast and he received them all -- he had no opposition! He was also active in the Acton Farm Bureau which was organized in the twenties with fine displays at the Fair.

I left Acton in the fall of 1929 to attend College in Santa Barbara and was away for the next 18 years. After graduation from College I lived and worked in Texas, Santa Barbara and Minnesota. During those years my mother and dad carried on at Acton and I always came home whenever I had a vacation.

After my dad laid down on the earth he loved and died in 1947, I came home to live with my mother. We enjoyed twenty-two happy years together until her passing in 1969.

I worked in the Acton Post Office for seven years and received my Commission as Postmaster from President Truman in 1951.

One day three ladies came to the Post Office and asked where the Old Acton Hotel was and were extremely disappointed when I told them it had burned down in 1946. Mrs. Charles F. Cameron, her daughter and a friend had come to Acton with the promise that Mrs. Cameron would take them to lunch at the Old Hotel! So, second hand, I heard some interesting accounts of "What used to be in Acton".

Mrs. Cameron had come to Acton in 1899 with her father and mother and seven other children -- Mrs. Cameron a little girl aged ten! Her father was interested in mines, and a friend of Governor Gage, a large man with a brown moustache, who came to their home for dinner quite often. Her father's name was Woodside.

According to Mrs. Cameron, the Acton Hotel was quite nice in those days and was run by Mr. and Mrs. Kruger, parents of Lydia Newton. Mr. Kruger was a very handsome German gentleman -- had a light brown beard, was very jolly, and played the zither for the amusement of the guests. The Hotel had a lovely grape arbor on the side where meals were served and Mrs. Kruger often had the Woodside family over on a hot day and served lemonade and cookies. The halls and upstairs rooms were carpeted in heavy Chinese matting which was well padded underneath.

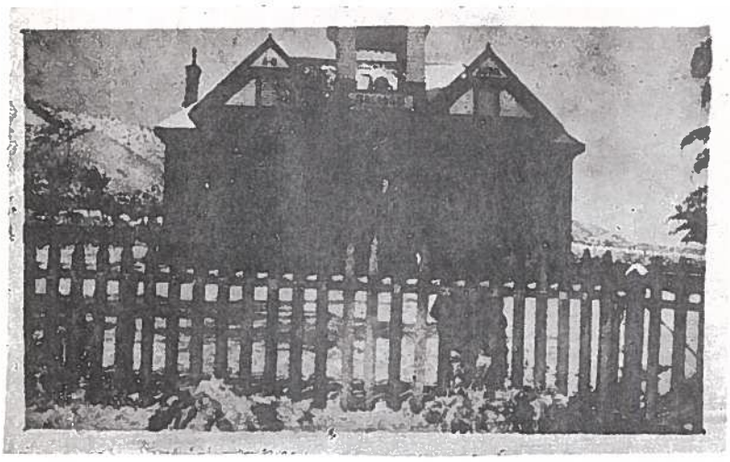
According to Post Office Records, the first Post Office was established at Acton on December 13, 1887. The first Postmaster was R. E. Nickel, whom I had the privilege of knowing when I was a little girl. Between 1892 and 1895 there was also a Post Office located at Ravena. Acton has had a total of nineteen different Postmasters.

While I worked in the Post Office I used my spare moments to remodel my mother's home, and since my Grandfather Gillian was a carpenter, I found that using his hammer was a big help. I was also proud to follow in the footsteps of my Grandmother Gillian who had been Postmaster in Inglewood, Kansas, back in 1892.

I resigned as Postmaster in Acton in 1955 and worked as a teacher with the Los Angeles City School System until my retirement in 1969.

My dad loved trees and each year got his quota from the Forest Service. When I took over the place after my dad passed away in 1947, there was an established oasis of trees. When the first pine cones began to fall in the sixties I named the place I call home, "Adams Forest Oasis". I am grateful for this heritage which represents more than fifty years of labor and love by my mother and dad. Thank goodness for Bossie who started it all!

Meryl Adams



Meryl Adams in 1920
at Soledad School,
built in 1890.

Palmdale School
Submitted by several
"Old Timers"

Display at Lancaster
"Alfalfa Fair"
in the twenties

THE STORY OF DOROTHY N. SWEET

May 12, 1973

Dear Shelton:

After re-reading your January 10 letter I am not sure whether or not you want to use the enclosed letter, so I will leave it up to you.

The letter really doesn't contain anything historical to the development of South Antelope Valley. However, it is historical to me for the reason that it tells of an era which is gone forever. An era in which there was time to live and to love.

It makes me sad to think about future generations being deprived of such a time. However, I guess we really never miss what we have never had.

Good luck to you and the good work you are doing.

Sincerely yours,

Dorothy N. Sweet

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Dear Shelton:

Long time ago, I remember when five-gallon water jugs were mighty precious items. Not for the same reason they are valuable today as beautiful containers for terrariums; but because we used them to haul our water in from the spring far up in the canyon. Whew, what a chore! I still remember how thrilled I was when we finally got the water piped to the house and I was able to turn on the kitchen faucet and see that beautiful sparkling precious 'stuff' splashing in the sink.

With the addition of water to the house we were able to eliminate the old 'outhouse' and have the luxury of an inside toilet. However, the old 'outhouse' had its advantages. It was a place to go when you wanted to get out of some unpleasant chore. In the winter, though, it was real unpleasant to have to tramp through snow to it early in the cold, cold morning.

Then, there was the time when I watched the huge Edison trucks place poles, one by one, bringing that valuable little fellow "Reddy Kilowatt" into our home. I think those poles with their cross arms silhouetted against the western sky were the most beautiful crosses I had ever seen. Before this wonderful event took place, it was a daily chore to make sure all the Coleman lanterns and kerosene lamps were filled before nightfall. Today, too often, we take these two necessary utilities (water and electricity) for granted, not appreciating them fully and certainly not conserving them.

But it was not all hardship at Skyland Ranch. There were also exciting times. We had an old scrawny lion that spent considerable time in the big pinon pine tree to the south of the house. The road to the spring passed near the tree, and as we neared the tree the old lion would lazily drop to the ground and saunter off. I finally got used to the lion, but the very first time I saw it I was virtually paralyzed from fear. Goose bumps as big as golf balls covered my body, I am sure.

One year we watched a mama bear and her two cubs make visits to the alfalfa field. We never attempted to get any closer than the binoculars.

However, one night we accidentally left a partially full five-gallon can of honey in the yard. During the night we heard quite a racket. Upon investigation, we found a bear having torn the can open was enjoying the honey. Needless to say, Dad and I watched the scene from the kitchen window.

Another time, we heard quite a disturbance from the rabbitry. My grandfather and I ventured out with a flashlite. We found a snake had gotten into one pen, had eaten the baby rabbits and then had proceeded to the adjoining pen. However, it had gotten stuck between the two pens with its tail still in the first pen, its body with the rabbits it had eaten was between the two pens and its head and upper body in the second pen. The rabbits in all of the pens were running around like crazy. My grandfather sent me into the house for the rifle and with him holding the flashlite I sent one big fat snake to its happy hunting ground.

Then there was the cold winter night I started for my bedroom. It was upstairs and the stairs to it were outside and all covered with snow. At the top of the stairs on the landing in front of my bedroom door was some kind of an animal. Believe me, at the time it looked as big as an elephant and as ferocious as a tiger. My dog was of no help. He just hid behind me and growled as I tried to frighten off the animal. In fact my dog almost knocked me over trying to get back into the house when I went for the rifle. It was only after I used the rifle and the animal tumbled down the stairs that I discovered it was a raccoon.

Now, the old lion is gone, even the old pinon pine tree. The bears have disappeared. The deer we could always find munching on the fruit trees have also disappeared into the past; and we never see a raccoon any more here at Skyland Ranch. However, the memories of the old times will live on and on as long as there are 'old timers.'

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Thank you so much for the lovely book. I really did enjoy it. It was so nice of you to send me a copy. I will want some more later for my family will get in touch!

Thanks again,
Maude Mesman.

Mrs. Allen L. Schlegel
69 Aster Lane
Levittown, Pa. 19055

27 January 1973

Dear Mr. Shelton Gordon:

Although I am unknown to you, we have mutual interests and memories of Palmdale and vicinity.

Three weeks ago our son, Alan Schlegal, was on a business trip to California. Since this was the first time he'd have a free week-end there, he asked me for some familiar names to try to contact and some landmarks to see in the Palmdale area. I was sceptical, for it's been fifty years since I've been there and about twenty three years since we've had any contact with folks in the Valley.

To my surprise, he located Mrs. Viola McBride at home, and they had an enjoyable visit. While there, Viola gave him the "Reminiscenses of Pioneers of Antelope Valley Folks" compiled by you. I have read it from cover to cover reliving again my nine years of childhood spent there.

My dad, A.O. Miller, was hired by the Southern Pacific Railroad as a telegrapher, and in 1911 we moved to the Bakersfield area from Reading, Pennsylvania. In 1912 he became an agent for the company and we moved to the Palmdale Depot. Many musical evenings and card playing times I remember there after Dad bought a new player piano.

Saturday nights there was dancing at the Palmdale Club owned by Mr. Richard Frahm. My mother and other ladies worked all Saturday afternoon making sandwiches and cakes to be served at midnight. Mr. Joe Martin was violinist in the orchestra. I remember one night my mother was chosen "Queen of the Dance" much to the displeasure of Dad, who was club president, and who did not enjoy the publicity. Alternate Saturdays we went to Valyermo or Leona Valley schools to dance.

My mother, Edna, helped to start the Sunday School and church service in the old Palmdale schoolhouse. The congregation later was the nucleous of the Presbyterian Church built "across town".

I attended 1st, 3rd and 4th grades in that same school house with Miss Clara Johnson and Miss Rose Gemmill as teachers of the two-room school.

In 1916 Dad left the railroad and bought the Littlerock General Store - post office, groceries, seed, farm equipment, miscellaneous and all - We were there just a year when Dad was called to Los Angeles to report for World War I duty. The armistice was signed while he was there, and since he had sold the store, we returned to Palmdale to live and find employment.

He kept books for Mr. Carl Fischer's Chevrolet Agency and had the post office for a short while before he went back to work for the railroad. I often think if he'd known what has happened to railroad activities, he'd rise up in his grave.

While, again, in Palmdale we lived in one of the Schneckenberger's cottages in what we called "across the tracks". There my brother Robert was born. I then attended the "new" Palmdale school, east and at the edge of town, for two and a half years as the only girl in my class along with eight boys. Miss Sadie Pallett was my very fine teacher.

In 1920, Dad found a steady job with the railroad in Selma, Calif., in San Joaquin Valley. My sister, Darlyn Dee, was born there.

We made a few trips back to Palmdale to visit old friends and vice-versa, but the wedding of Viola Wells to Stroud McBride in Mr. and Mrs. Frahm's home in the orchard was the last visit there. That was in 1923.

We later moved to Lemon Cove where I graduated from Exeter Union High School in 1925. That fall, we moved to Reading Pennsylvania and now live in a 20 year old, 80,000 plus populated area between Philadelphia and Trenton, N.J. on the Delaware River, called Levittown. We, too, know what progress and growth have done in a short 20 years.

But all these many years I have wondered so many times what has happened in your area. I have heard on T.V. and read news items of the enormous progress in your part of the world - especially the growth of the aircraft industries and airport developments - and always with a special interest when the name "Palmdale" was mentioned.

And now after fifty years of wondering, I finally am able to experience it again due to the thoughtfulness of Mrs. McBride, or son Alan, and your most informative recorded history compiled by you.

So, full of nostalgia, I thank you so much for an enormous idea and much work so interesting to another "oldster".

I am sincerely,

Mrs. Allen L. Schlegel
69 Aster Lane
Levittown, Pa. 19055

Kathryn Miller Schlegel

P.S. Your book has traveled far, and when I return it, farther still. Have any of them traveled as many miles? Please accept my apology for poor penmanship as I am a handicapped arthritic and writing is difficult.

HISTORY OF THE LAKE HUGHES POST OFFICE

(John Munz was Postmaster in Palmdale from about 1895-1898, before moving to the Lake. He succeeded Ferdinand Tetzloff as the Palmdale Postmaster.)

From 1898 to 1955

In 1898 John Munz moved to the Elizabeth Lake country from Palmdale, California. After the death of his devoted wife and mother of his nine children, Mr. Munz, with his four boys and five girls, saw much adversity. Mr. Munz never remarried. The youngest child, Lotte, was adopted by life-time friends in Switzerland. The Munz' were originally from Switzerland.

In 1898 there was mail service twice weekly, to Elizabeth Lake. Mrs. James Hefner was the Elizabeth Lake Postmaster. The Post Office was located on the present Bonnar Ranch, at the east end of the Elizabeth Lake. At that time, Chas. Hann, a carpenter, was the mail carrier between Del Sur and Elizabeth Lake Post Office. Mr. Hann, having other interests, sublet the mail-carrier job to the two oldest Munz girls - Ingeborg and Mollie. Ingeborg is now Mrs. C. H. Holland of Pasadena, and Mollie - the late Mrs. H.V. Clotts. For many years they drove Mr. Hann's horses and surrey (buggy) to transfer the mail.

In 1902 John Munz and Patrick Lavell wrote the Postmaster in Washington, D.C., and petitioned for a Post Office at the west end of West Elizabeth Lake, now known as "Lake Hughes". The Post Office was granted, providing the mail was carried for one year free of charge! Munz and Lavelle agreed to do this. (In those days - no cars - only horse transportation.) This Post Office was known as the Roosevelt Post Office (in Teddy Roosevelt's time). Patrick Lavelle, living farthest west, was made Post Master. John Munz accepted the mail carrier job. After two years, due to ill health, Patrick Lavelle gave up the Post Office.

In 1904 John Munz was appointed Post Master and held this office until 1920. During those years there were numerous mail carriers. Pearl Maxwell was the first paid carrier. Then mail was delivered three times weekly. Gotlup F. Ritter was the carrier, using horses, for many years between Del Sur and the Roosevelt Post Office at Munz Ranch.

Due to ill health and many changes, Mrs. Hefner abandoned the Elizabeth Lake Post Office.

After John Munz came Mrs. C.C. Juday as Post Master. She tired of it, so it was moved to the Arthur Steiner Ranch up Pine Canyon, which they soon tired of, and the Roosevelt Post Office was discontinued.

After some lapse of time, Mrs. Eli (Gertrude W.) Munz (daughter-in-law of John Munz) felt deeply about there being no Post Office between Palmdale and Sandburg, some 50 miles, so she wrote to the Post Master in Washington, D.C., and petitioned to restablish the original Elizabeth Lake Post Office. Mrs. Eli Munz, a permanent resident greatly feeling the need of the surrounding neighborhood, was willing to accept the duties as Post Master. This appointment was made immediately, and on July 16, 1923, Mrs. Munz became Post Master of the Elizabeth Lake Post Office. She served from this date until August 1925. Homer Snider served from August 19, 1925 to 1927.

During this time, the Post Master only received the "cancellation - for service rendered". Due to people coming long distances for mail or money orders, or Parcel Post, they were served at early and late hours, (not like now, with hours from 9 to 5 and paid good salaries). The office was in a separate building, under lock and key, with a surprising amount of business transacted. The Post Office netted $75.00 to $150.00 per quarter term, or about $500.00 per year. Bertram Gookins, George Atmore and son Percy, were mail carriers.

In the early Twenties, Hurd & Brannon recognized the possibilities and future of the Lake Country. They promoted and built the Lake Hughes Trading Post, and did much building in that vicinity. Mr. C.A. Austin and his father opened a subdivision at West Elizabeth Lake due to the influx of people. It was thought the Post Office would serve the people better if moved there.

The property subdivided was part of the Hughes Ranch adjoining the Lake, therefore the name "Lake Hughes" was born and the original name of West Elizabeth Lake dropped. So the new Post Office was named the Lake Hughes Post Office. Homer Snider, relative of Mr. Brannon, was made Post Master in the Lake Hughes Trading Post.

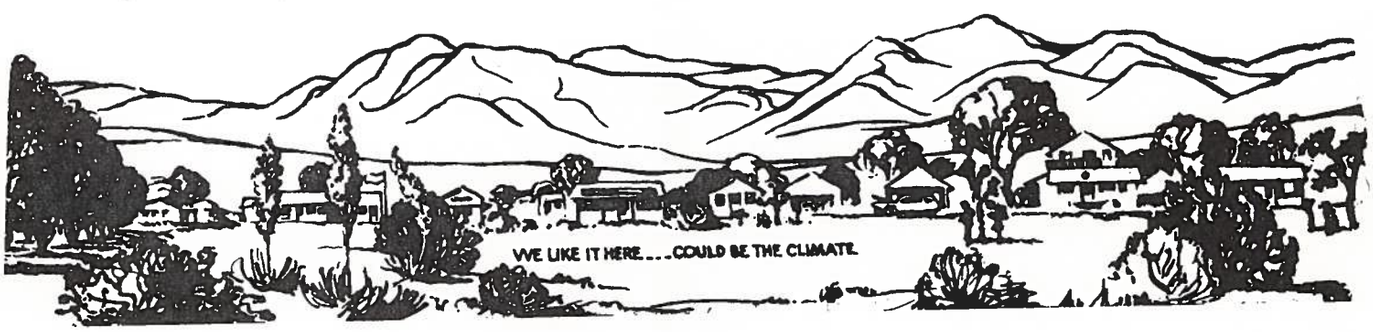
Conditions changed and he gave it up. At that time, in 1927, Mr. J.B. Hurd was appointed Post Master and served the Lake Hughes Post Office until he retired in 1959 after 25 years of service. Mrs. Louisa Hyatt, daughter of Mr. J. B. Hurd, served as acting Post Master until the appointment of Mrs. Walter (Dorothy) Haines in 1954, who is the present Post Master.

Much praise can be said on behalf of Mr. J.B. Hurd and his wife, Mary, who acted as his assistant. For many years they served the people of our community graciously and willingly, always ready to serve one and all.

Upon Mr. Hurd's retirement, more than 200 friends and relatives came together and had a wonderful community banquet dinner, served in the Lake Hughes Recreation Center, in recognition of his many years of service and his many community interests. Mr. Hurd's two sons - Joel and Charles - and their families, operate the Lake Hughes Trading Post. Even the retired Mr. Hurd is still active in the Lake Hughes Chamber of Commerce, Recreation Center, Sportsman's Club, and a Trustee in the Community Presbyterian Church. "Where there is community work to be done - there is where you will find our retired Post Master." Throughout the years, Mr. & Mrs. J.B. Hurd and Mr. and Mrs. Eli Munz have enjoyed many long and beautiful trips together, covering many states, and including State and National Post Master Conventions in Washington, D.C., New York, Bermuda, Hawaii, and many California State Cattlemen's Conventions.

Respectfully submitted,

Mrs. Eli Munz



A. Earl Jones
927 E. Ave. Q-9
Palmdale, CA 93550

February 13, 1973

Dear Mr. Gordon:

The following is the story of a few of my memories of Palmdale.

In the spring of 1913, my father, A.A. Jones, better known as "Hardpan Jones", came to Los Angeles from Alberta, Canada, to look for a location for a new home. He took a real estate excursion bus to Palmdale with several others who bought land at the same time. Dad liked the tract of land that was planted to pear trees and located north of which is now Palmdale Blvd., between 9th and 10th streets east and north to the Safeway property. He wouldn't buy it, though, until they got him a shovel so that he could dig a hole to see if there was any hardpan. From then on he was called "Hardpan Jones". Finding no hardpan, Dad bought the tract of land consisting of nearly six acres. He then sent for the rest of us to come to California.

My mother, sister Mabel, brother Lloyd and myself arrived in Los Angeles on April 7, 1913. We rented a house in Los Angeles to stay while Dad and I built a house in Palmdale. At this time there was only one small lumber yard in Palmdale, and most of the lumber had to be shipped from Los Angeles. The sand for the foundation had to be hauled from Littlerock Creek. After we got the house enclosed, the rest of the family moved to Palmdale. Although the original house was added on to and later remodeled, it remained my mother's home until 1967 when she died at the age of 95.

Roads then were very different from what they are today. The only road to Los Angeles was a dirt road down through Soledad Canyon and at times after a rain it was impassable due to the high water. The only way we could go to Lancaster was to go out to 10th St. W. as there was no road along the railroad tracks as there is today. It was too sandy in that area to build one. To go to Mojave, except by train, we had to go out to 60th St. West and up through Willow Springs because there was too much water north of Lancaster except during the dry summer months. There was a graded road east of the railroad tracks from Lancaster to Mojave, but with the least bit of rain it became too slippery for travel. We had a lot more rain in those days than we do now.

There were no electric or water lines in Palmdale at this time either. We used kerosene lamps for light, cooked and heated with wood stoves and got our drinking water from a well located just west of 8th St. E. and north of Palmdale Blvd., known as Pike Moore's well. An open irrigation ditch ran along the west side of our property so we got our water to wash clothes, dishes, etc. out of that.

Dad bought a team of horses, a wagon and some farm equipment and we made a living by hauling sand from Littlerock Creek and doing orchard work. A cement pipe yard was opened up just west of the railroad on Ave. R to make pipe for the Irrigation District. As we had one of the few teams in the area, we hauled most of the sand from Littlerock Creek for the Irrigation District at $2.00 a yard. We could only haul two yards a trip and only one trip a day so that was $4.00 a day for man and team. There were very few trucks here and due to the road conditions and sandy wash, it was impossible to use them anyway.

Later Dad bought a Model T Ford so that we would have some way to get to Los Angeles to buy groceries and other things that we needed and couldn't get in Palmdale. This was a two day trip and quite an event in our otherwise rather dull life. Our only form of entertainment were private parties and schoolhouse dances where we did have a lot of fun. Neighbors visited more then, too, and were always ready to help each other in any way that they could.

A man by the name of Jarvis Phillips was instrumental in getting telephone service to Palmdale. The first telephone office was located at the corner of what is now Sierra Hwy. and Palmdale Blvd., where the Richfield gas station is located. There were only thirteen phones at first. A street called Jarvis was named after Mr. Phillips but is now the continuation of Ave. Q-9, the short block west of the railroad track.

Mother was one of the first librarians in Palmdale. When she took it over it was located in the old school building where the Roy Maryott school now stands. She received no pay until later when the county took it over. She remained librarian until 1942. During that time the library was moved three times, the third being where it is at the present time.

After I returned from World War I in 1919, I got a job as engine watchman for the Southern Pacific, and was stationed in Palmdale. They kept several big engines there to help the freight trains up the Vincent grade. Later I became a fireman and worked out of Los Angeles. During the next ten years the only times I was in Palmdale was when I was stationed there. When we had the depression in 1931, I was cut off and I returned to Palmdale and went to work for the Los Angeles County Road Department. Later I joined the Sheriff's Dept. from which I have since retired.

My wife, the former Ruth Pickit, came to the valley with her folks in 1918. Her father was the foreman of the Graham Ranch, a pear orchard in the Quartz Hill area. She attended and graduated from high school in Lancaster. After graduating, she worked in the post office in Palmdale for Genevieve Frahm. We were married in 1926 and built our home on E. Ave. Q-9, which is still our home. We raised four children, all attending the only grammar school in Palmdale then, and called the Palmdale Grammar School. It has since been changed to the Roy Maryott Grammar School. There being no high school in Palmdale, each had to go to Lancaster. A bus would pick them up at the corner of Ave. Q-9 and Sierra Hwy.

My folks old home was sold in 1968 to the Pacific Telephone Co. All the buildings were torn down to make room for a parking lot and the new business office for the telephone company.

Palmdale has certainly grown and changed a lot since the day I first saw it when I came with my Dad in 1913 to start a new life for us all. Ruth and I travel around most of the time in our travel trailer, but with two of our children and four grandchildren still in the valley, we return often, and Palmdale will always be home to us.

A. Earl Jones
(New Mailing Address)
38974 Juniper Tree
Palmdale, CA 93550

EARLY HISTORY OF ANTELOPE VALLEY

Introduction: This story of the early history of Antelope Valley was given by Mrs. H.P. Schoeller (known to all her friends as Ruth Schoeller) on October 12, 1933, at a Palmdale Womans Club meeting at the home of Mrs. F. B. Hitching.

Antelope Valley is now conceded to be a part of the Mojave region bounded by the Tejon on the west, the Tehachapi mountains on the north, Mojave river on the east and the Sierra Madre mountains on the south.

The first white man to enter Antelope Valley of whom we have any record was a Spanish priest, Padre Frey Francisco Garces who in 1776 visited the Mojave Indians. These Indians lived close to where the town of Needles is now situated. There were also several "rancherios" of Indians along the Mojave river and at one place, probably between the present towns of Victorville and Barstow, Garces met several Mojave Indians who were returning from trading at San Gabriel Mission. Continuing up the Mojave river nearly to its head, he crossed the San Bernardino mountains and arrived safely at the San Gabriel Mission.

We also read of his return trip to the Mojave villages - up into the San Joaquin and through the Tehachapi Pass.

Garces' journey was remarkable, not only because he was the first white man to penetrate the unknown desert, but also because he made it with no equipment such as the later explorers had, for he depended entirely upon the hospitality of the Indians.

Next we hear of Jedediah Smith, the famous American trapper. With fifteen men he left Salt Lake August 22, 1826. He probably followed the same route as Garces had taken to the San Gabriel Mission.

In 1829 Kit Carson came through this country going to meet Americans that had come around the Horn by boat.

There is almost no record of other travelers passing through this region until Fremont crossed in the spring of 1844. His party crossed the Valley hunting the Spanish trail.

In 1847 twenty-five members of the Mormon Battalion, who had enlisted to aid the United States against Mexico, went from Southern California back to Salt Lake by way of the Antelope Valley. It is said that these men took with them the first wagon that ever went over the Salt Lake trail.

In 1849 the Manley party or the Jay Hawkers were caught in Death Valley and remained while Manley and a companion came ahead to locate watering places and obtain help at Los Angeles. They came by way of Red Rock Canyon through Palmdale down the Soledad Canyon to the Camulos Ranch between Saugus and Fillmore. There they obtained a supply of food, two horses and a mule, and returned to help the party that had been left in Death Valley. The horses had to be killed and only the one mule survived the return trip. Food was buried along the route. The one mule and the oxen, so poor they were hardly able to travel, were all that was left to carry the necessities. The Arcane and Bennett children were placed on the oxen or the smaller ones at times were carried in their fathers' arms. The women walked. Unaccustomed to such toil, with the added agony of thirst, they suffered untold hardships. As a matter of fact, the travelers seemed not to have suffered as much in Death Valley as they did crossing southward across Antelope Valley. When they arrived where Palmdale is now, the snow was so deep on the Vincent pass they had to camp here until the snow froze so that the oxen could cross.

From 1851 on, travel became more frequent between Southern California and Salt Lake.

A Mr. Nadean, who afterwards built the Nadean Hotel in Los Angeles, opened a wagon route from Los Angeles to Nevada. They came by way of Newhall and Soledad Canyon to Barrel Springs and the Cienega in Little Rock Creek, where they generally stayed for a few days resting the horses before starting out across the desert. A part of the old adobe walls of the Garcia house are still standing where they made their headquarters.

Nadean was the man who made the cut through the hill near the old Newhall tunnel in Fremont Pass. Before this time the wagons had to be pulled up and over the hill with a winch.

In the notes of Lieut. Williamson, who was sent out by the War Department to locate a southern route for a railroad across the Antelope Valley in 1853, we find there was eleven feet of water in a lake where our Palmdale Reservoir is now located.

The government started a survey of the Antelope Valley in 1855, and a Mr. Davidson, who formerly lived at Acton, was a member of the surveying party. He tells of trying to make camp at what is now known as Lovejoy Springs where they were attacked by the Indians. Three of their party were shot and all of their horses stolen. Under cover of darkness they were forced to carry the three wounded to a little mining camp in the Soledad Canyon below where Ravenna is now located.

Some time in 1861 stage lines were started through this way to San Francisco from San Bernardino which afterward became a part of the New Orleans - San Francisco stage route. Only in the last few years have the stage signs been destroyed which marked the way across the Valley.

Skirting the foothills from the Cajon, above Llano, past Gale Henry's, above Littlerock to the Cienega, then past Barrel Springs and Harold or Alpine as it was then called. Here the very old red buildings surrounded with eucalyptus trees stood until recently with the old lettering "Alpine Springs" discernable across the front. This was the post-office, hotel and regular stage stop. From here the road led across the floor of the reservoir to the Lansing place, or Johnson's Dairy, then down the hill to the Ana Verde Valley to about even with the City Rancho, where it dropped down into the Leona Valley and on out to Elizabeth Lake, over the Tejon and north to San Francisco.

By the early sixties a number of stock ranchers had settled in this territory, particularly in the west end of the Valley.

The railroad was built through here in 1876. For a time the railroad ended at Ravenna waiting for the location of a route across the Tehachapi mountains.

Quite a large German colony was started, before the railroad came through the Valley, three miles east of the present Palmdale, called the Palmdale Colony. When the railroad was completed and a station built at this point, it was known for years as West Palmdale.

Lancaster also sprang up about this time.

From 1884 to 1890 a wave of land-settlement brought a great number of settlers into various parts of the Valley. The most pretentious project was on Big Rock Creek called the Rio del Llano colony.

Alpine Springs colony was located where Littlerock is now, while in the west end of the Valley, Neenach and Manzana were quite pretentious districts.

The first irrigation that we have any record of was water taken out of the Big Rock and used on lands now known as the Valyermo Ranch.

The drought of 1893 came on and most of the settlers were forced to give up their homes and leave the Valley, as deep wells and pumping plants were unknown.

On account of the very cheap land and the boom in California, many unscrupulous promotors took advantage and sold land in various colony schemes. Much of this property was sold "sight unseen" at the Chicago World's Fair. Pictures were taken of vast grain fields with grain as high as a man's shoulders, by having a man on horse-back stand in an irrigation ditch.

A large amount of acreage was sold in the Alpine Colony (Littlerock) with a town lot thrown in in the city of Tierra Bonita with each acreage purchased. This town was laid out north of the present Littlerock orchards. Pictures show broad streets with pine trees and buildings on either side that would compare with a present day moving picture lot as the buildings were old fronts and canvas, for picture purposes only. The trees were brought down from the mountains then trimmed and set in the ground.

Some promotors did not so much as take the trouble to even file on the land, but subdivided and sold almond orchards planted on government land, for which they gave an engraved certificate of title in a fictitious title company.

Many of the houses built on these city lots and small farms were later moved into Palmdale and Lancaster.

The years of 1911 and 1912 saw much activity in Lancaster. The Los Angeles acqueduct was being built and the streets were lined with wagons with as many as twenty mules hitched to each wagon, hauling supplies and materials out to the acqueduct.

Grain farming was at its height in the west end of the Valley, with seven hundred and fifty car loads of grain being shipped out in one year.

With five saloons, three large hotels and a number of small ones, watering troughs for the horses and mules, two hundred feet in length, mud in winter, dust in summer - Lancaster was a typical western frontier town.

The road from Palmdale to Lancaster wandered in and out and around clumps of juniper and sage brush through the sand, only one track wide, but if one happened to meet a team they would draw to one side and give the noisy chugging automobile all the road there was.

To go to Lancaster was quite an event, for there one could purchase a few kinds of fresh vegetables, fresh meat, ice, and even an ice cream cone, which generally ended up the orgy of shopping.

Palmdale boasted one brick store building which housed the general store and post office. Here we could purchase ham, bacon, and anything that could be found in cans in those days. No lot was complete without its pile of empty tin cans.

The little red school house across the tracks was the center of all the town's social activities and the one school teacher was mistress of all she surveyed.

Dances on Saturday night and in fact until nearly sunrise, Sunday School on Sunday morning, an occasional church service, funerals,political meetings or weddings were all held in the school house.

The main event of the day was the 10:20 train in the morning coming from Los Angeles, and the 4:00 train in the afternoon going to Los Angeles. Who came and who went was of great interest, for the trip by automobile was long and arduous. A dirt road led to Vincent, then down along the railroad tracks to Acton whence you could take your choice between the winding rough road through the Soledad, crossing and recrossing the stream, or through Mint Canyon, which was farther, and equally rough.

In 1914 Job Harriman started his socialist colony at Llano and for a while there were a thousand people there with two hundred and fifty children in the school, but the ideals set for the colony did not work out, and family by family they departed, leaving many empty houses which one by one have disappeared until only a few foundations mark the place of the settlement.

As is the way of all new countries, people come and go. It is said it takes three generations to settle a country. I am reminded of a poem by Gene Lindberg --

The yucca grows and blooms upon the plain,
Bright land of sunlight and infrequent rain,
Vast land of beauty, arid, clean,
Guarded by bayonets of living green.
The yucca is the symbol and the sign
Of the wide west, for in this plant combine
The cruelty and beauty, hope and pain,
The vigilance and promise of the plain.
The yucca flings a challenge: If you dare
Go pluck the slender blossoms growing there,
But let no cowards try, for he who gets
The prize must face a thousand bayonets!
The West is like the yucca: it invites
The strong and courageous, but it smites
The fools. None but the wise may hope to gain
The gifts of the gardens blooming on the plain.

Always among the pioneers of a new country are some we shall never forget. Foremost among these is a Mrs. Nellie Lansing. She and her husband came to the Antelope Valley in 1883 and built an attractive home up above the Palmdale reservoir across from where the Johnson Dairy is now located. The Lansings planted an orchard of olives and almonds and their eastern flower garden of lilacs, iris, violets, etc., was almost breath taking as one turned into their yard from the hot, dusty road. A conversation with them was just as refreshing as their garden. Mrs. Lansing was instrumental in organizing a Woman's Club. They held all day meetings at the homes of the members. I would like to quote from a paper Mrs. Lansing wrote for one of these meetings in 1920, and I only wish I could read you the whole paper. It was put away in the files at the school house, but when the school was rebuilt it disappeared.

"From Alpine Heights in the Ana Verde Valley south of Palmdale, I looked out thirty-seven years ago over the immense expanse of land called the Antelope Valley. There were a few habitations scattered here and there with little green patches surrounding them, which indicated an acreage of green fields and embryo orchards with which those early pioneers started the environment of our future Palmdale.

The climate was superb, rains were generous in those days. Springs were full of water and there were little streams running

hither and thither in the fields and canyons. Wild flowers galore covered the ground with carpets of rose color, blue and gold. Mariposa lilies, lupins, larkspurs, baby blue eyes, golden poppies, lovely primroses, dainty white forget-me-nots, wild pinks and purple verbenas, and the beautiful desert aster were all over the gypsum hills, making joyful the hearts of those who loved flowers.

The wide desert, the Buttes and the distant mountains gave us daily entrancing pictures with their wonderful lights and shadows blended with all the lovely colors of the prism."

Those of us who have seen this Valley as it is so beautifully described by Mrs. Lansing, patiently wait for the present cycle of dry years to pass when once more dame nature will paint with a lavish hand our hills and plains.

We look forward with enthusiasm and hope to the future of the Antelope Valley and back to the romance and solitude that the ever changing buttes have witnessed from their strong-hold in the center of the Valley.

Mr. Petchner, another pioneer so beautifully expresses my thought in his poem:

Antelope Valley Past and Future
Into the past, oh, acres vast -
Gray sage and yucca tree -
Day by day shall ye fade away,
To ashes and memory;
Till the garden of God so long untrod,
And so long misunderstood,
At last shall bloom in the sweet perfume,
Of flowering vine and wood.
Then the silence old of ages untold,
Shall drown in the ringing song,
Of the farmers field, of the orchards yield,
And success that has waited long.
And where was the gray of yesterday,
Tomorrow's green shall come,
And here at last shall the weary rest
And the wanderer find a home.

* * * * * *

By Mrs. Ruth Schoeller

PALMDALE PERSONALITIES OF THE THIRTIES

by MILTON STARK

Dear Mr. Gordon,

Recognizing that the perceptions of a small boy are not always very accurate and that the passage of time has a way of blocking out some memories and overly glamorizing other experiences, I will try to present one man's view of the people of Palmdale in the 1930's.

There were many interesting and nice people who lived in this town of maybe 800 in population. Some of the ones I remember are the following:

"Old Man" (Evan) Evans (my dad referred to many men more than 20 years older than he was as "old man" but my sister and I had better say Mr.) was head of the Palmdale Division of the L. A. County Road Dept. when my dad first started to work there. We would visit Mr. Evans occasionally in a house just west of where Radio Palmdale is now. We got our haircuts in Mr. W. W. Holmes Barber Shop on Sierra Highway just south of the present Ave. Q-9 for 50 cents with kind words thrown in for nothing extra. We always had the feeling that he knew how to talk to kids. On the south was the Valley Press which in the mid-thirties was operated by Judge Henry Loft and his sister Bonnie. He also doubled as Scoutmaster. Mr. Fehrensen's drug store on the corner of Sierra Highway and Avenue Q-9 had a marvelous soda fountain complete with marble top and high stools. Next door was Mrs. Fromes' Post Office and next to that was Iklers Dry Goods Store. I remember Stroud McBride Sr. as the friendlest man around. In the next block north of the shopping area was the Palmdale Inn operated by Howard and Agnes Bland. It wasn't until after the war that I really got to know Agnes Bland. I found her to be a beautiful, interesting and most gracious person. East on Palmdale Blvd. was the Presbyterian Community Church presided over by Reverend Hood.

The school was a beautiful red brick building where Mariott School is now. It had to come down after the 1933 Long Beach earthquake but I was able to graduate in it because it took awhile to get money to build a new school. My teachers were Katherine Gustave in the 6th grade, Ralph Fesler in the 7th and 8th grade and Joyce Paul (now Edmonson) was the school principal. In talking to Mrs. Edmonson recently I found that she (as could be expected) has many fond memories of students in that school. It is apparent that she was deeply involved with the activities of all of her children.

One story which I think is significant as a depression story is about a little boy who ate onion sandwiches. Mrs. Edmunson says that it was the custom for the teachers to eat lunch with their classes in a group. In one of the lower grade groups one little boy would always ask to be excused and go eat by himself. Upon investigation it was revealed that every lunch he ate onion sandwiches, nothing but onions and bread. Being concerned about children who did not get enough of the right things to eat, Mrs. Edmonson approached the little boy, asking him "wouldn't you like another sandwich?" He looked up at her and said with great feeling, "But I like onion sandwiches."

Of all of the fine people in Palmdale the man who it seemed to me earned the greatest respect from the residents and who was one of the town's most outstanding and certainly most interesting leader was Wm. J. McAdam Sr.

WM. J. McADAM

Bill McAdam, real estate broker, insurance broker, orchardist, Mason, Kiwanian, high school board member, hunter (but best of all) public speaker, seemed to really enjoy life and people. He possessed a dry wit and what seemed to be an endless supply of jokes and anecdotes which he used in his many speeches at school affiars, service clubs, etc. which kept people laughing. (That alone would have earned him quite a following because we certainly needed to be able to laugh during those rough times). His son, Bill Jr., says that he actually did have a file of jokes and stories fully categorized as to subject matter, but

unfortunately these have disappeared. But maybe it is just as well because I am certain that without Mr. McAdam's style and talent for relating them, they could not be near as funny as they were then.

A sample of his style of humor as his family remembers is that he used to say that the biggest disappointment of his life was when as a young lad he snuck under the side of a big circus tent expecting to find clown and wild animals only to get stuck in a revival meeting! Once he told his wife Ethel when she was sending out bills to their insurance customers, "Don't send a bill dunning that fellow. He duns himself everytime he sees me." At a meeting of the Palmdale Kiwanas (of which he was a charter member) someone hid the fine box, so that he could not assess penalties on the members. He solved that problem by having the pianist (who was possibly his daughter, Dorothy) play the Star Spangled Banner, causing the members to stand until he could locate the box.

He seemed to love small children and throughly enjoyed watching them perform. On several occasions he invited my sister, Zanita (who was "taking elocution lessons" and who gave "readings") to perform at Kiwanas Club meetings. One reading was called "My Dolly Has the Flu". When she got to the punch line of "Her arms flew, her legs flew, yep, my dolly has the flu" Mr. McAdam would break up with laughter which was most infectious to all.

He and his hunting friends apparently tried to outdo each other with practical jokes. On one hunting trip, Mr. McAdam set Billy Ritter up by getting him involved in a game with a hand axe. The idea was to sink a hatchet into a log or stump, blindfold a player who would pull the hatchet out of the stump and attemp in three tries to hit the stump as near as possible to the original mark. Each player would bet 25¢ on who could come the closest. Well, Billy Ritter had a new hat and when they blindfolded him, he took the new hat off. Well when they gave him a couple of extra whacks he should have known something was wrong. Somehow or other that new hat had gotten in the way of the hatchet and got cut all to pieces.

Bill McAdam Jr. tells the story about his dad planting a large watermelon patch. Because of the problem with rabbits and coyotes, he planted the rows nearest the outer fence in citrons. These looked like watermelons but they were inedible and took a good chop with an axe to cut them open. Frank (his dad's brother) had a bunch of family friends up from Pasadena. Mr. McAdam put Frank up to talking the friends into a watermelon raid that night. I guess under the theory that stolen melons always taste better than going out in the field and picking them with permission. "Well of course dad was all ready for them. He let them crawl under the barbed wire fence and get armloads of what they thought were watermelons before he started firing his shotgun up in the air. Those guys started running and got themselves all torn up in the barbed wire fence just to end up with a bunch of citrons."

Among his several enterprises was the propogation and growing of fruit trees. One of his advertisements in the Valley Press of January 1930 was to promote family sized fruit orchards. His own family fruit orchard both at the old house in Pearland and his new home at 12th and Palmdale Boulevard attested to his skill in grafting fruit trees. Further, his pear orchards in Pearland produced some beautiful fruit until "hard ends" became too much of a problem.

Mr. McAdam had a strong and unfailing faith in the future of the development of Antelope Valley. He frequently advised his family and friends to invest in Antelope Valley land. There are several stories about how he developed plans whereby people could buy property more easily and he even loaned money so people could continue to make payments and not face foreclosure. How fortunate this was when in the 1950's this land sold for many times the purchase price.

In view of Wm. J. McAdam's love for people and his enjoyment of life, it is most appropriate for "his town" to have a city park to further people's enjoyment of life, named in his honor.

William J. McAdam, Sr.

Ethel McAdam

RALEIGH GALBRAITH

One of the more colorful personalities around Palmdale from about 1930 until his death in the late 1960's was Highway Patrolman Raliegh Galbraith. The first contact I had with Mr. Galbraith was at the Palmdale Grammar School one evening when I was assigned to take tickets for some school function. Mr. Galbraith strode through the door in full uniform of high black boots, leg-of-mutton pants and pearl handled revolvers strapped on each hip. I knew I should collect a ticket from him just like anyone else, but frankly, at 10 years old, I just didn't have the nerve to ask.

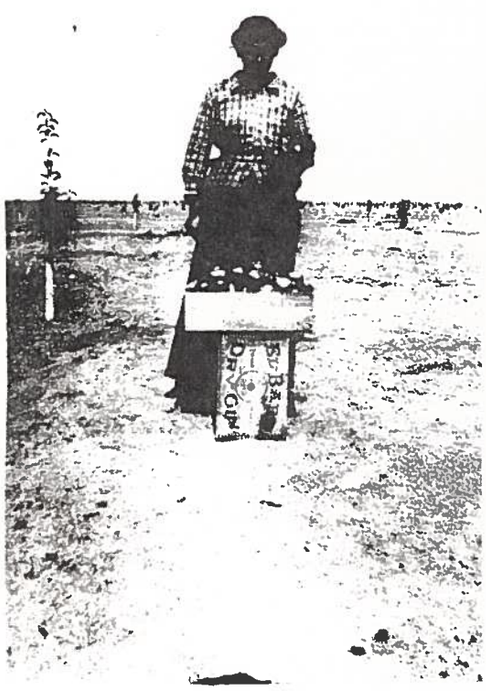
In the performance of his duties as the only highway patrolman covering a wide area of Antelope Valley he rode both a motorcycle and a patrol car. In either one he had the reputation of being able to go around death curve faster than anyone else and still stay on the road. His motorcycle had frequent need for rear tires due probably to his famous fast starts. Over the years, Raleigh wore out a considerable number of patrol cars with his high speed chases. The patrol car which was best remembered was a black and white Chysler Airflow of I think about 1933 vintage. Just the looks of that car should have convinced people they couldn't outrace Raleigh.

Raleigh became a legend in his own lifetime because of his skill with a pistol. I have heard that he was on an Army championship pistol team shortly after World War I and he had many trophies and medals. Although I had heard many stories about his marksmanship it was not until I was home on leave as a young 2nd Lieutenant that I got a chance to verify this first hand. My cousin, Clarence Perkins, also home on leave after 5 missions over Europe as a B-17 pilot, brought a liberated German Luger to show Raleigh. We were taken to his underground shooting gallery on Palmdale Boulevard just west of 6th Street East where we witnessed the most remarkable demonstration of sharpshooting I have ever seen. Perkie held a rock above his head and on a signal from Raleigh, dropped it. Before the rock hit the ground, Raleigh had taken his gun from its holster (a spring loaded device which opened up when his finger touched a spring in the trigger guard) and fixed six shots, all of which hit the bullseye on the target and all of which overlapped, forming one irregularly shaped hole. He also lit a match held by Perkie and cut a calling card in half, which Perkie held flatways.

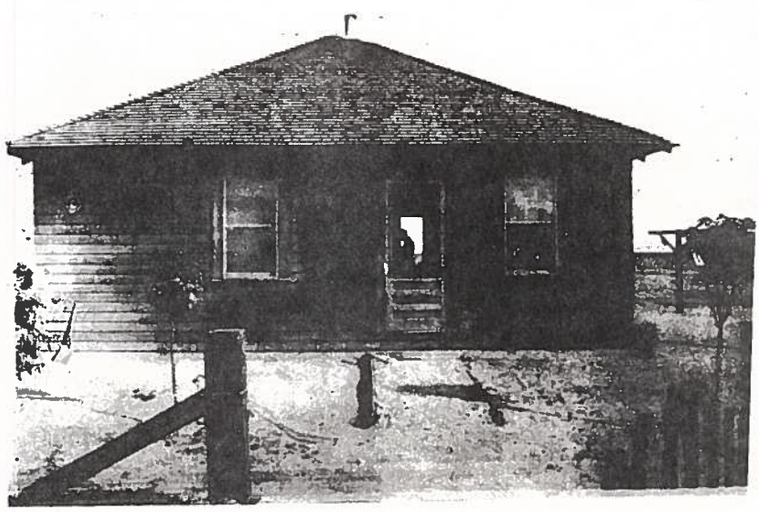
One heard many stories about Raleigh's performance with a pistol. One that I have heard at least two versions of had to do with a K-9 dog which had not been sufficiently retrained after his Army career to be safe around anyone but Raleigh. He had warned his mother and his housekeeper not to bend down when around the dog. One day Raleigh stopped by his home to check on the dog who was tied out back by his airplanes. After his mother, the housekeeper and he had checked the dog, he turned and started back toward his patrol car. The housekeeper apparently dropped something while still within reach of the dog and bent down to pick it up. Haleigh heard the dog's low growl, whirled, and shot the dog in midair as it leaped toward the housekeeper. It was only when he reloaded his pistol that he realized that he had actually fired his pistol twice, hitting the dog in the head with both shots.

Raleigh tended toward the overweight side and to look at his rather short stubby fingers, it was difficult to believe that he could have such precise control over a pistol. It also came as a surprise to many people that Raleigh was a talented pianist who could provide a great deal of entertainment for his friends. In my brief contacts with him after his retirement, I gained the impression that he was a man who knew and was known by many people but practically no one knew him really well.

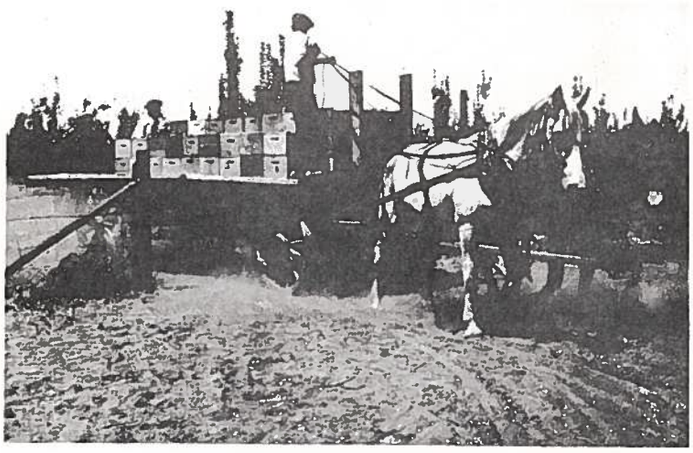
Mr. Gordon, the above contains only brief glimpses of two Palmdale personalities. I hope that should you put out a third edition of your book, that someone could contribut more stories about these two gentlemen as well as the many other interesting people in Palmdale, California.



Mother Jones
Selling Apples
from their
Orchard

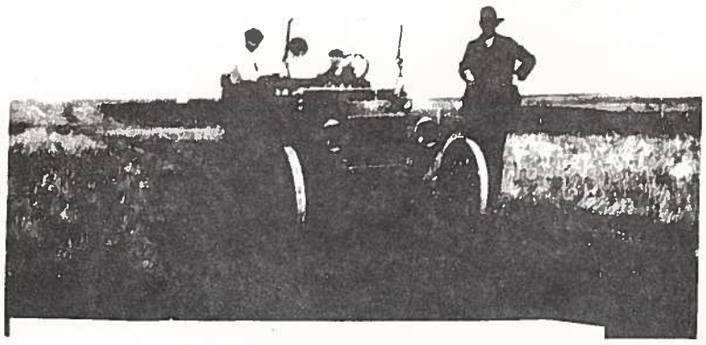


A. A. "Hardpan" Jones home when built on Palmdale Blvd... New Telephone Building is now on the site.



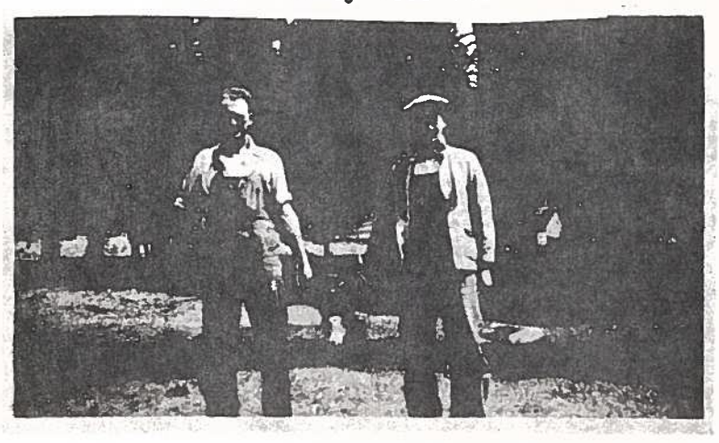
Pear Harvest on A. A. Jones
acreage (New Telephone Office)

Dad Jones and team



"Dad" Howard Jones and his
1913 Model T Ford
Sure doesn't look like the
A.V. Freeway does it?

A.A. (Hardpan) Jones
Boy unknown
Littlerock Dam



Bill McAdam and A. A. Jones

ALICE E. HULL, PIONEER

A MOST INTERESTING AND INSPIRING STORY ABOUT A RANCHER, BUSINESS WOMAN, BUILDER, DEVELOPER, COMMUNITY MINDED PERSON, INTERESTED IN THE REPUBLICAN WOMANS' CLUB, LANCASTER WOMANS CLUB, THE ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL MEDICAL AUXILIARY AND MANY OTHER PHILANTHROPIC COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES, INCLUDING THE RED CROSS.

August 15, 1973

Most of the stories and letters in this book have been written by the pioneers themselves, but since Alice Hull has had an injury to her right forearm I am trying to write up an article about her. This was supposed to be done by Mary Ann Johnson, but she is away on vacation. Now I am being pushed to get my material in to the printer so I shall try to give a good report of a very interesting hour I spent at Alice Hull's house with tape recorder and paper and pencil attempting to put down the information that barely touches on a very interesting life.

Alice Hull was born in the Del Sur area which is west of the present Lancaster. Her mother, a San Francisco girl, came to this area with her husband Mr. Specht and took up a 160 acre homestead in Esperanza. Mr. Specht had a respiratory condition that they hoped would clear up because of the dry climate. However, in a few years he died leaving Mrs. Specht a widow with four small children. She sold the 160 acres and moved to Maynard, which is now Del Sur, working in the store and post office there. Then a little later a Mr. Radloff came into the picture. He had also a homestead and eventually met Mrs. Specht and they were married. Alice Hull was their only child. Alice and her father were very close and she liked to help her father with the operation of the ranch rather than do housework with her mother. She loved animals and had her own horse which in those days was the only good means of transportation for a young lady. She became an expert horsewoman and enjoyed the freedom of ranch life.

Alice graduated from the one room Del Sur school and then since she did not particularly care for high school and because she liked business she went to business college in Los Angeles. Her parents sold the ranch and moved to Lancaster. They bought a beautiful landscaped home on what is now Sierra Highway and was then called Antelope Blvd. The location was where Alex's Cafe used to be. One of the interesting things Alice remembers is the artesian well that they had at their home, the pressure being so great that the water went up several feet in the air making a beautiful fountain in the front yard. Her father bought a great many lots right in town, which he improved and built upon.

When Alice completed her studies at the business college in Los Angeles, she found a very interesting and good paying position with a real estate firm known as Whidden and Taylor.

Then she met and married Albert Hull who had also taken up a homestead in the Wilsona area and was also in the building business. It was not long before they were very busy doing a great deal of the building in Lancaster. They built the first Bank of America, schools, homes, etc. They also bought up vacant lots in the vicinity and built homes on them for sale and for clients. Then they got into the concrete pipe business and with his brother formed the company known as Hull Brothers. The Hull brothers bought and operated many ranches in and about Lancaster, Alice being very busy helping with bookkeeping and the office work.

Alice's mother passed away in 1941. Albert Hull passed away in 1942. Alice's father came to live with her and then he passed away in 1945. After her husband Albert died she kept the ranch that they owned personally at 30th and I, which she managed expertly. She loved her horses and animals and was a

very good business woman. She would ride out early in the morning from her lovely home on Beech St. to her ranch, tend to the business of operating it and then get home about noon. However, gradually water levels kept going down because of the large number of alfalfa ranches. The power bills were enormous as were the taxes, so she sold out and more or less retired at her charming home.

However, she was not satisfied to be inactive. She had been and was even more active in the building of the Lancaster Woman's Club, the Republican Woman's Club as well as many other community activities. Her pet project was to be getting a hospital in Antelope Valley. She and many other civic minded people worked night and day to get a hospital built. The sad situations of suffering by people that had gotten hurt, injured or were sick that needed up to date hospital facilities spurred her on to see that a hospital was built. The result of the unselfish work of herself as well as many other of her friends now shows what people working together can do. THE ANTELOPE VALLEY HOSPITAL MEDICAL CENTER IS A MONUMENT TO ALL THOSE WONDERFUL PEOPLE INCLUDING ALICE E. HULL.

Alice helped organize the Hospital Auxiliary, serving on the Ways and Means Committee, and is still active in its many projects. She works in the "New to You" Thrift Shop when possible. She has given over 4000 hours as a volunteer in the Hospital Auxiliary.

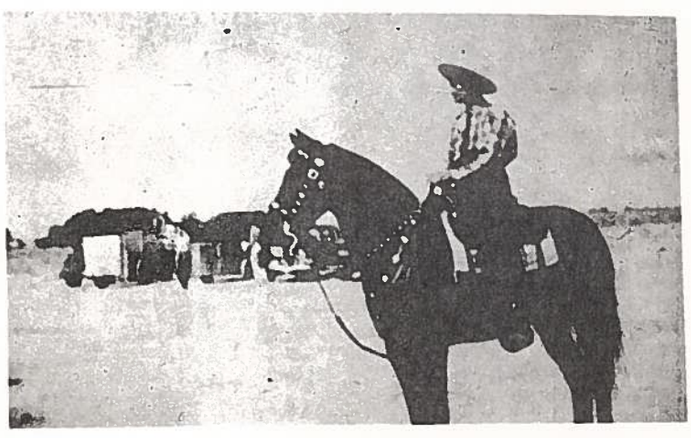
It was a privilege to visit Alice Hull at her very unusual home and see the many things she has done to make her home interesting, such as braided rugs on the floor, and the most attractive drapes on the windows; all make up a home that shows the character of the occupant.

So, we close this brief story of a most charming and interesting person. Alice Hull is truly a product of the Antelope Valley. Born here, gone to school here, been in business here, prospered here. But never too busy to be active in the affairs of her community. Her heart and soul are in the life and development of our great Antelope Valley.

This story is typical of many other people that have also helped to pioneer here. These stories and letters that have been gotten together hardly scratch the surface of the many tales and reminiscences that could be gotten together if one had the time and the strength to do it. This is a wonderful story that is typical of many other worthy and courageous pioneers.

Sincerely,

J. Shelton Gordon



Alice Hull on "Buttons", 1943

Trail Horse Class Competition at A.V. Dude Ranch. She took 1st place in competition with nine (9) men.

Alice Hull, nominated "Woman of the Year" Represented the A.V. Hospital Aux. 1971

Medical Center Gift Foundation Board formed, volunteer members named

An especially-qualified volunteer team to be known as the Gift Foundation Board of the Antelope Valley Hospital Medical Center has been appointed to spearhead a Valley-wide effort for improved health care.

Members of the new Gift Foundation Board were announced this week by Mrs. Francies Kuhn, RN, medical center director of development.

They are: Mrs. Alice Hull, civic leader; Charles Colo, retired bank executive; Dr. Homer Rowell, pioneer Valley physician; Mrs. Mary Dermody, community heart fund chairman; and Mrs. Grace Oliver, Indian artifacts expert and wife of one of the medical center's original board members.

Others are: Mrs. Elizabeth Waugh, Lancaster attorney; Jack Murphy, Lancaster's Honorary Mayor; Victor Ryckebosch, Valley turkey king and long-term friend of the medical center; and Clarence W. Kelly, president of the AVH Medical Center Board of Directors.

Kelly will act as liaison between the new Gift Foundation Board and the directors of the medical center, assuring good communication between these two decision-making groups.

Also included are the current presidents of three hospital-related organizations — the Alpha Charter Guild, the AVHMC Women's Auxiliary, and the Women's Auxiliary to the Los Angeles County Medical Association (District 16). They are the Mmes. A. W. Thompson, Charles Cooke and Lee E. Bockhacker.

The new Gift Foundation Board represents leaders of various community endeavors and professions, bringing together a wealth of knowledge to carry out the common objectives of a low-keyed development program.

The board held its first meeting at the AVH Medical Center this month to formulate plans for a program of giving. Purpose of the fund program is to provide improved medical facilities and services through donations.

Like other not-for-profit hospitals, Antelope Valley Hospital Medical Center is constantly faced with the dilemma of holding costs down while keeping up with the expensive, changing needs of modern medicine.

Through the efforts of the Gift Foundation Board, Valley residents will be made aware of developmental needs of their non-profit medical center and will be given an opportunity to share in fulfilling these needs.

Gift opportunities include:

1. Annual membership enrollment in "Friends of the Medical Center," who will be kept abreast of new, local medical activities and services.

2. Memorial donations and encowment funds to perpetuate the memory of family members and friends.

3. Bequests or trust funds planned as gifts to the living in the way of excellent medical care.

The Gift Foundation
of
Antelope Valley Hospital Medical Center

Receives and Administers Gifts for the Advancement
of Patient Care in the Antelope Valley

Thank You *Your gift helps provide new services and facilities for patients of the Valley's only non-profit medical center.*

THE ANTELOPE VALLEY INDIAN MUSEUM

by Grace Oliver, Owner

August 15, 1973

Dear Shelton,

You asked me to write about how I became interested in having a museum and of its history. I'll try to hit the highlights for you.

I remember when I first saw the building that was to become the home of the Antelope Valley Indian Museum. It was in the fall of 1938 when I spent a weekend with Elliott and Rena Cheadle at their desert cabin on the south side of Piute Butte, fifteen miles east of Lancaster and close to what is now Avenue M. For me it was a beautiful and memorable two days.

After a steak dinner cooked over an outdoor fire, we took a hike to the top of Piute Butte to watch the sunset. As the huge red sun sank over the horizon and the afterglow seemed to be every color of an artist's palette brushed across the sky, I remembered other such sunsets I had seen in the Indian country of Arizona and New Mexico where I had been a guest and participant in archaeological field trips.

It was in the reverie and atmosphere that I looked beyond great spires of strange and beautiful rock formations standing like sentinels to direct my sight beyond a sandy slope studded with Joshua trees to a large building of varying roof levels sprawled between outcroppings of rock as though it had grown there. This was something I'd have to investigate another time.

The following Saturday I left our house in Santa Monica with my mother and daughter and headed for Piute Butte and to the building I had seen from its top. I had studied topographic maps that I had used several years previously for research in other areas beyond the buttes. I decided to try going east on Palmdale Boulevard. The week before, the Cheadles had to go by way of Lancaster to pick up their water tank mounted on wheels which they kept stored in the General Telephone Company yard. Elliott was Executive Vice President of the company.

This section of Palmdale Blvd. and the nearby butte area was new territory for me. No section roads were cut through to the North for miles, so we followed a faintly visible and scarcely used trail. Any car tracks were mostly obliterated by rabbit tracks. The trail wound between Lovejoy, Alpine and Rocky Buttes. Then we spotted Piute Butte standing tall and alone. We had made it.

A very tanned young man with a shock of blonde hair named Rex greeted us and asked us into the house.

I sat in a rocking chair at one end of the forty-foot living room and looked up at a ceiling that was thirty six feet high at its highest level. I marvelled at the way this room was built around the natural boulders that had become an integral part of the walls. The Indian painting took me back to the Hopi Mesas in Arizona. Hardly conscious of it I said that this was the place I had dreamed of but didn't know it existed.

Rex informed us that Mr. Edwards, an artist, had built the place and had been wanting to sell it for several years. He was teaching art and set design at Lincoln Heights High School in Los Angeles and found this place too much for him to keep up.

With this information I asked Rex how much was wanted for the place. He quoted a price and said he could contact Mr. Edwards by telephone but that the closest phone was four miles this side of Lancaster and that there was no phone that he knew of on the way to Palmdale. I handed him the keys to my Cadillac Twelve and told him to call Mr. Edwards and tell him if he were really interested in selling to call my lawyer Monday morning. The purchase was made, but I was not to talk to or meet Mr. Edwards until 1944, six years later.

Many months later I learned of Rex's drive over a winding sand road to the Graham alfalfa ranch on the north side of the butte where he would pick up a paved road. Harry Graham was at his mail box when he saw Rex weaving toward him in low gear. Rex stopped with some difficulty and asked Mr. Graham how to change gears. Mr. Graham wondered where this young man had been that he knew nothing about cars. He asked Rex how he happened to have this car and where he was going. Rex said, "A crazy woman from the city wants to buy Yato Kya (Mr. Edwards' name for his desert home) and just gave me the keys and said to get to a phone and call Mr. Edwards." Mr. Graham got in the car and gave Rex his first driving lesson. He drove with him until Rex could shift gears and steer without fighting the wheel. By the time I heard about this, many of Harry Graham's friends were familiar with the story. I learned that it had brought chuckles at several board meetings. Harry Graham was very civic minded and had a quiet sense of humor that friends admired.

While Rex was gone, we started a careful survey of the house. It was a charming home furnished in a rustic manner befitting the surroundings. The huge dining room was used for large family dinners. The built-in cabinets at either side of the entrance displayed Mrs. Edwards' fine hand painted china, most of which had been made by her sister-in-law, Violetta, who taught this art in Lancaster. Four big bay windows in this room brought the desert indoors. The kitchen was very large and held a massive iron wood cook stove, refrigerator, a six foot round table and a sink with long counters at either end. From the windows over the sink we discovered the only water supply in the house. A tank on a small truck bed sat just outside and a hose was connected to the sink. Hot water came from a great tea kettle on the wood stove. The thought came to me that without water, there could be no bathrooms. The other rooms consisted of bedrooms and study.

When Rex came back we all sat down to the lunch I had brought. I was eager to learn more of the people who owned this place. The first thing I asked was where the water came from to fill the water tank. There was a well a half mile away at the far corner of the property where a gasoline car engine brought up the water to fill the tank.

Rex told us of an Indian play Mr. Edwards put on in a natural ampitheater among the boulders at the base of Piute Butte and of how neighbors and the people of Lancaster and Palmdale had offered their services and talents. It rained before the play and the attendance wasn't as good as it could have been so it was repeated the next spring. How I wished I could have seen it but that had occurred four or five years before. He had put on the play to get the money for the lumber to build the "upper" room. I questioned "<u>what</u> upper room?"

Rex said, "You mean you didn't go up to the Museum?"

That was the end of lunch.

He took us up a passage way through great ceiling high boulders and up crude stone steps to a narrow door. I had seen this before, but just thought it was an outside door.

The door opened into a long hall-like room with an uneven floor of boulder tops so one must watch one's step. A single light bulb hung from the high peaked ceiling. The black painted walls were covered with grey and white cards upon which were mounted Indian artifacts from the Southwest and California. There were many projectile points from Illinois which I immediately recognized as mound-builders points. My excitement was at it height when three bats came flying over our heads. Mother and Beebee scurried down the stairs but I stayed and marvelled at what I was seeing. But I was saddened by the condition of things. There were several pack rat nests and a few baskets that were hanging had been badly eaten. It was easy to see how they got in. The room was built up from the floor, a foot or two, with rocks. I could see light coming through at places. The walls consisted of one thickness of rough one-by-twelve lumber which had shrunk in the heat and the sun so that they had pulled away from the outside batten that had once covered each crack between the boards. I was dizzy with excitement.

It was getting late and we had to leave for home.

The first of the week my lawyer advised me that the sale was in process, but because of the artifacts, the sale would have to be advertised for six weeks.

During those weeks further examination of the property was made. Nothing could dampen my enthusiasm. There was not anything that couldn't be made right, even when we found that the outside wall of the building was plasterboard that had been treated each year with used crank case oil with green pigment added. This treatment preserved the thin paper covering for years but now time had taken its toll and holes were appearing. The plaster would crumble at a touch. This plaster board had previously been used in theatrical sets at school and given to Mr. Edwards.

I knew I could never bring collections into this building and I also knew that those in it must be removed until this building was rebuilt.

The progress chart in sequence was something like this: Repair well, Install electric pump, Lay half mile of water line, Have big water tank installed high on the racks behind the building, Build bathroom.

Now when these things were accomplished we could get bids on the building. The outside had to be completely rebuilt but the interior must be preserved as far as possible.

As soon as the water system was completed and a bathroom built, we spent every weekend possible there. Mrs. Edwards' sister's husband, Mr. John Brewer, had done a perfect job on all of this plumbing and even built the bathroom. He knew exactly what he was doing every inch of the way. It is little wonder that he developed the biggest plumbing company in the Valley. He started and still has the A.V. Plumbing Co. on North Sierra Highway. No one had to be there to oversee anything John Brewer did.

I wished the rest of the work were to be as easy. But I couldn't find a building contractor that would tackle the building. I tried six large and reputable companies from the city but not a one would touch it. They said the cost would be prohibitive and it would be best to raze the building and start from scratch.

About this time I was thoroughly disgusted. I couldn't see anything so difficult about it. I took my troubles to John Brewer. He said I had looked in the wrong places. He knew a builder in Lancaster that he felt would do the job, although he was practically retired. Mr. Orr came out and said "no problem". He knew he could get the help he needed. The work would have to be done on a time and material basis because one didn't know what the structure was like behind the plaster board exterior until it was removed. The work was slow but in time he produced a structurally sound building. The cement and stucco to this day has not produced a single crack and the original color has not even faded after thirty years. Mr. Orr will be remembered as the father of James or Jack Orr who was with the Lancaster post office for twenty some years and became the postmaster. Another son, Lawrence, known to all as "Red", had a grocery store for years on Lancaster Boulevard and now owns and operates the market at Roosevelt, east of Lancaster.

After a caretaker's cottage was built and a guest house, I started bringing in collections. Display cases were built, and much electrical work done. I was busy preparing artifacts for display. I planned to open the place in February of 1942. I wanted to spend a couple of months during the last of 1941 in Central America.

After a very dependable couple who were well known in the area, Mr. and Mrs. J. Williamson, had moved into the caretakers cottage, I left the place in their charge, and flew to Guatemala. From Guatemala City I took many trips to archaeological excavations not only in Guatemala but in Honduras as well. I was having the time of my life. But I was asked to donate a few weeks of my time in the National Museum in Guatemala City and was happy to comply because I could learn a great deal there. Their store room was far more vast than I had expected.

They were trying to install a new system of cataloging and I was to help. This would take many years but I did my bit for a few weeks and enjoyed every minute of it.

At the one and only big hotel in Guatemala City at the time, I became acquainted with Dr. and Mrs. Smith. We discovered that the professor's next door neighbors on campus and his co-worker had been close friends of me and my family years ago in Lincoln, Nebraska. They well remembered hearing my name. That Saturday evening we had dinner together. I learned he was on a leave of absence from an Eastern University to spend a year with Rockefeller Foundation Institute. Among other things he was giving scholarships through Central America before going on to South America. They asked me to travel with them as far as Costa Rica and I could be of assistance when it came to certain scholarships such as art. I was delighted. And the museum director urged me to make the best of this opportunity.

We enjoyed a delightful dinner that Saturday night in the very large dining room but with only three tables occupied. Not many people were at the hotel this time of year.

The next morning I was up early and in the lobby. The radio was screaming that Pearl Harbor has been bombed by the Japanese and that soon we would hear the President of the United States declare war. Excitement ran high. All the people from the U.S. gathered together to hear President Roosevelt. This was simply unbelievable, yet it was true.

Dr. Smith left for a while. When he came back he said that Guatemala was going to declare war also and that the three of us had been asked by the President to come to the "Palace" as his guests to hear his declaration speech. Of course it was in Spanish but we didn't have to understand it to be thrilled at witnessing this bit of history making. This was one more unforgetable event I experienced on this trip.

As we went to Honduras and Nicaragua we were just in time for that country's declaration of war and each time we were invited guests of the Presidents. I could hardly believe this was happening to me.

The Smiths went to South America and after enjoying San Jose and seeing the major archaeological spots I flew back to Guatemala. I had made reservations at the Mayan Inn at Chichicastenango for a week which would include Christmas. I can't recall the exact date I left San Jose - I wish I could, but it was approximately a week before Christmas, 1941.

Pan American was the only commercial airline through the Central American countries at that time. All their planes were the very dependable DC-3s.

On the flight from San Jose we had only been in the air a short time when I looked out the window toward the Pacific. Far off I saw a formation of planes. And far beyond I thought I could make out more planes. At that time I was very familiar with every type of aircraft built in the U.S. because my business was involved in a small technical way.

I knew these were not U.S. planes. I hurriedly called the steward and whispered to him that there were formations of planes to the West that were not American planes and to tell the Captain to look at once. He fairly ran with my message. In seconds our plane quickly started ascending to the clouds. Aircraft at this time did not have pressurized cabins but oxygen was carried in the plane for emergencies. We kept in the clouds that were particularly high that day. We did not stop at Managua or Tegucigalpa as called for and the passengers were concerned and questioned the steward. Then the Captain announced that the plane was called straight to Guatemala and all passengers would be sent back by Pan Am to their respective destinations. That seemed to satisfy everyone. I was the only woman on board.

I was sure no one had spotted these planes but me. I knew we had taken to the clouds for cover. The altitude had affected a few of the passengers and

they were given oxygen. About fifteen minutes before we got to Guatemala I happened to look out and see the propeller on my side come to a stop. I was petrified! Apparently I was the only one to notice this. I said nothing. It was easy for me to see from where I sat. We were now out of the clouds and at about 2,000 ft. altitude. Then I saw the propeller opposite come to a stop. I looked at my watch and calculated the actual flying time between each country and believed we should be close to Guatamala City. We were, and the Captain brought us in through a canyon so narrow that it was only Pan Am's experienced pilots that could have made it. We landed safely.

I went to the hotel where a private car from Clark's Tours was waiting to take me on the rugged mountain trip to Chichicastenango. I had no time to speak to my friends in the Pan Am office across from the hotel. A couple from Panama, two other people from the states and myself gave the Mayan Indian children their first Christmas tree and Santa Claus, with gifts for every child in the village. This was my best Christmas ever!

Two days after Christmas I went back to Guatamala City and my hotel. When I entered the hotel I was stunned! The lobby was so filled with U.S. service men, I had difficulty reaching the desk. The manager rescued me and took me to a big room on a patio they had saved for me. He told me that the very next day after I had come in from Costa Rica to go to Chichicastanango, the U. S. Air Force started sending planes and personnel in. Now the town was flooded with them. He did not know why this happened so suddenly (but I thought I knew why). He notified my friends at the Pan Am office that I was there. Soon the manager and two flight captains who happened to be in the office came over. We sipped long drinks in my private patio. Neither captain had been on my plane that had made the miraculous landing the week before but somehow they knew it was I who had spotted the Japanese planes even before the captain of that plane told them. The plane that had lost both motors was still there waiting for new motors. Apparently the high altitude had something to do with the motor trouble. There was an employee at the Pan Am office who had been in the only other plane to ever come through that narrow canyon, except that they did not make it. The plane was being flown in from Mexico City with only the crew aboard. The steward survived the crash. He was thrown from the plane afire, still buckled in his seat. Pan Am at that time had never had an accident or lost a passenger's life. And this was rugged country - all mountains with no landing field between countries.

It was not until after the war was over that I learned that there had been a Japanese carrier within striking distance of the canal, in the Pacific, and it was thought that the enemy planes were headed for the Panama Canal. However, the fact that the captain alerted the proper channels, our fighting planes from the Canal Zone found and destroyed these planes. Of course we all realized that these Japanese planes could have been warned from other sources also, but we got to see the first enemy planes attempting to reach the Pacific Coast. The General who told me this believed the aircraft carrier was destroyed also, but could not state it as fact.

I left for home then. My new plant building was finished and archaeological play was over for the duration of the war. The museum was to have opened in February 1942 but I was asked not to open it to the public because of gas rationing. Just before the close of the war I was permitted to complete the construction of four cottages that had been started on the museum grounds.

In the summer of 1944 Gladys Graham was a house guest for a couple of weeks at my home in Santa Monica. She asked if she might invite Mr. and Mrs. Edwards to visit us some afternoon. I learned that Mr. Edwards had contacted her several times to see if she would talk to me about a position of most any kind for him at the museum. They were invited to lunch and for the afternoon. This was the first time I had met or talked to either of them. The knew nothing of the restoration work of the museum building except that the Brewers had told. Mr. Edwards was not at the school anymore and would like to get back to the desert and take any work I could offer. All I could do was to replace the caretaker. He was shocked and surprised when he saw that his house had been rebuilt and was now a sturdy well conctructed building. I had finished the museum by 1942 but I had him mount three large cards I had laid out. Other than that his work consisted of printing the Indian designs on the outside of the building, erecting

cane fences and developing a picnic area. He had much time to himself to paint pictures during the fourteen months he was there, leaving in December of 1945. The war was in progress during this time and the museum was not officially opened but no one who found their way there was ever turned away.

For some reason I had always thought that Mr. Edwards had been the one that had collected the Chumash material from the Channel Islands that I had seen the very first ime I had visited the place. But I learned shortly after my purchase that this material had been on loan from Mr. Sanger. Mr. Edwards had never made but one trip to the Islands and unfortunately he was too ill while there to scout for artifacts. Also the weather was not conducive to being out on a wet windswept island.

Through the ensuing years Mr. Sanger and his sister Agenes were my very close friends. I had acquired the collection that Mr. Edwards had on loan from Arthur Sanger and also many other large fine pieces both by purchase and gifts.

Mr. Sanger had spent much time during his adult life collecting early Indian artifacts in the Channel Islands and the Santa Barbara Coast. He worked under a permit from Mr. Hey of the Museum of American Indian in New York and took much of his expenses in artifacts Mr. Hey gave him. The Sanger material is a vast part of the Museum's California Hall and I give great credit to him. It would have been impossible for me to have ever collected these artifacts that so well tell the story of the lives of these noble people who were destined to disappear through the ravages of civilization.

All during the war years from February 1942 until the end of the conflict service men only were supposed to be admitted to the Museum. There was never an admission fee for these men. More than ten thousand were brought to the Museum during the war in long caravans of military trucks. Occasionally I was privileged to be there and greet them myself. Although they had stood up in the trucks all the way from Barstow or March Field near Riverside they were a gay and happy bunch and most appreciative of the Museum. We still have some of these men as Museum visitors who come with their families - even grandchildren.

On a Sunday in 1962, six of them who had been in the same theater of war and had visited the Museum before going to the South Pacific, had a reunion in the Museum picnic grounds. They were from four Western states. Their wives and children were with them. It pleased me that they chose this spot for their get-together.

Polaris Air Field was the training school for pilots from England who would return to the British Air Force. This airfield was located at 60th Street and Avenue I, west of Lancaster. I have no idea how many young men were brought here for training but every one of them had a trip to the Museum. For most of them it was as far as they ever got from camp while in training.

As soon as the war was over the Museum opened without fanfare except for articles in the Los Angeles papers written by their own staffs. I was forced to close the Museum twice for health reasons, once in 1949 and 1950 at which time the artifacts were removed and the Museum became a guest ranch. When doctors gave me a go-ahead I was able to get it back again and have a museum which was even better than before. Again I was forced to close for over two years beginning in 1963 for many reasons including health. I had lost my husband, Joseph, in 1960. It was difficult adjusting to going it alone. I missed his encouragement and his help in thousands of ways, although he was never active in the Museum operation. We had been married over fifteen years. I had built up the Museum alone but now all incentive seemed lost. My own doctor and other physician friends in the Valley had urged me to close the Museum and travel for awhile but I tried to stick it out by working even harder. Finally I was given no alternative but to close. During this time, after a month in the hospital, I took a world tour and then the following year spent some four months in Europe, mostly in museums. The fact that my museum here was an accredited institutional member of the American Assn. of Museums and was in the National Museum Directory, a copy of which every European museum had, made it possible for me to be shown archaeological store rooms and preparatory laboratories not seen by the public. I came home in perfect physical condition and with great enthusiasm. And again the museum was opened.

Although we had always had many groups of Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Brownies, Indian Maidens, Indian Guides and Camp Fire Girls, we were to have even more than before and from greater distances, some from as far away as San Diego to the south and San Luis Obispo to the north and many points between including all of the beach cities. We had always had school buses from San Fernando Valley, Acton, Victorville, Apple Valley and other desert areas and some from Los Angeles but now for the first time we were to have every 3rd grade class in Lancaster which was scheduled for the season. Palmdale School District did not schedule classes but most if not all of the 3rd graders come through efforts of the P.T.A. This was the most gratifying of anything ever occurring at the museum. After all, I had built it with the children of our own Valley in mind. It was almost unbelievable how many children had never visited a museum of any kind. Teachers told me that out of a class of thirty, there might be none, one, or a very few. This made all my years of effort worthwhile and made the deficit at the end of the year easier to bear. I have never taken a salary of any kind from the museum.

For the third time I was forced to close in the Spring of 1972. Knee injuries had brought about a condition that reached a point where I was unable to walk and carry on the duties of operating a busy museum. I am now able to get about after long treatment and am at present preparing the Museum to open once again. Its closing has not been lost because the interior is being refurbished and new cases have been prepared. Nearly every case on the main level has been changed and material not previously seen will be on display.

It has been suggested that I should have kept the museum open and have others operate it but I have certain high standards that could not be maintained without costly professional help which was not possible on the small admission fees charged and with no grants or financial help from any government agency.

I have loved my work and feel privileged in having been able to give so much of my life to this little museum in the desert. It is there for all to enjoy.

So, Shelton, after I started this you said to give the full story so this is what I have tried to do. I hope that all will enjoy this story of the Antelope Valley Museum.

Fondly,

Grace Oliver

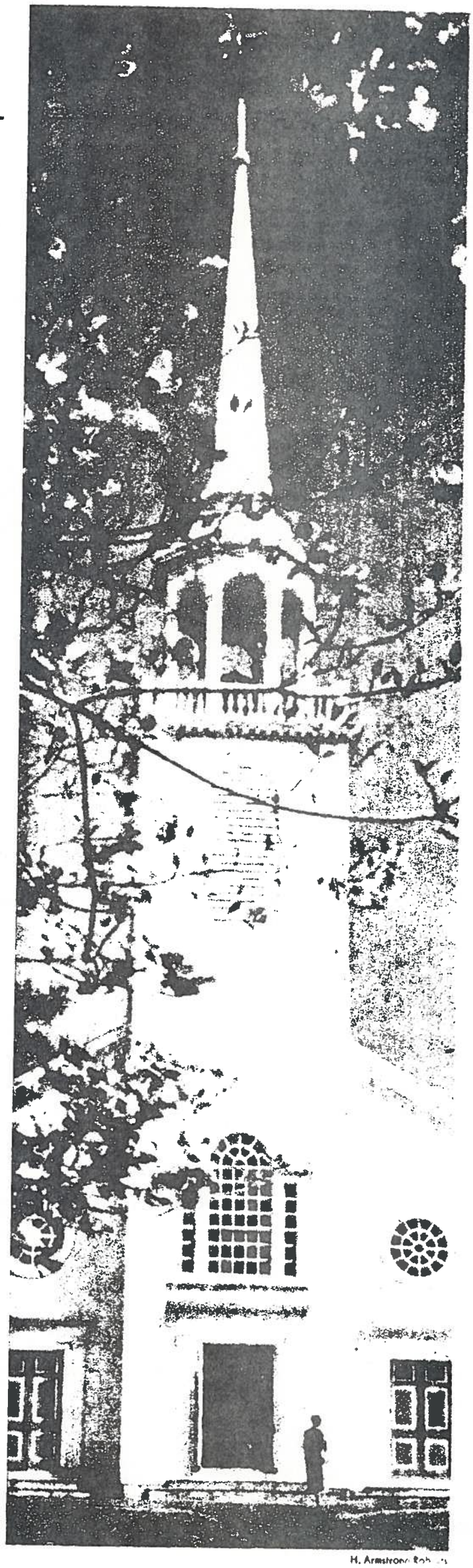
Words To Live By For This Easter

The Perfect Prayer

Lord, make me an instrument of Thy peace.
Where there is hatred, let me sow love,
Where there is injury, pardon,
Where there is doubt, faith,
Where there is despair, hope,
Where there is darkness, light,
Where there is sadness, joy.

O Divine Master, grant that I may not so
much seek to be consoled as to console,
To be understood, as to understand,
To be loved, as to love,
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned,
And it is in dying that we are born
to Eternal Life.

—St. Francis of Assisi



H. Armstrong Rob...

OLD TIMERS' TALES

Resident Reconstructs History Of Goddes Coming to Valley

(Ed. Note. This is the second in a series of facts concerning settlement of the Valley in conjunction with Leona Valley Old Timer's barbecue, planned for June 28.)

By RITA KENNEDY

Located on the floor of Leona Valley and just east of the Leona School along Elizabeth Lake Pine Canyon Road is an old frame house and a large weathered barn. The structures nestle under the stately protection of huge shade trees which tend to cloak the battered cellar door and the colorful graceful garden of flowers. Should the heads of these huge protectors appear bowed and bent, one may assume that the wind is to blame, but perhaps it's because Kline and Kate Billet are leaving. If these same aged trees could speak, they would tell you that just last week they overheard Kate Billet say, "I must look hard at these old hills while I still can."

As a small child Kate first viewed these same hills from her father's wagon as the family bumped along on the bottom land of what is now Godde Pass enroute from their home in Quartz Hill to Leona Valley. Kate's father owned 300 acres of land in Leona Valley where his cattle grazed on the foothills and hay grew on the rich flatland. The Billet house was constructed by her father about 1901 and served then as a bunk house. Kate Billet's father was Fred Godde.

In the 1880's Fred, Max, Frank and Ferdinand Godde, four of ten children, left their farm home in Germany, arrived in the United States, and came West to Los Angeles. The boys had been aware of the increasingly crowded conditions that confronted the German farmer, and they were intoxicated with the stories that they had heard of the opportunities in America, the land of plenty where there was ample room for a farmer to expand his holdings.

The Goddes traveled to Santa Maria, back to Los Angeles and chose to homestead in Antelope Valley. The exception was Ferdinand who remained in Los Angeles. Fred, Max, and Frank each settled on 160 acres between Avenue N and M in Bellview, which is now Quartz Hill. On the day that Fred Godde arrived in Antelope Valley he got off the train in Lancaster and walked southwest until he noticed a prominent hill.

The pioneer climbed to the crest of this hill and was awed as he viewed the surrounding area. There, alone atop Quartz Hill, he experienced the security of knowing beyond a doubt that he had found the land he wanted to settle.

The Goddes grew grapes temporarily but leased land for permanent grain farming. Years were merciless and dry, and grain had to be cut by a homemade, hand-pushed tin cutter resembling the present day grass catchers on a lawn mower. Almond growth was limited mainly to California Missions, but the Goddes observed that almond trees were growing in the Westside district. With information obtained from agricultural books, they dry planted groves of almond trees. The venture was most successful, and their crops were marketed to Los Angeles candy manufacturers. Water had to be piped to the Godde homestead from springs in the canyons west of Quartz Hill. The old Godde house and almond trees remain as a tangible link to the past.

Fred Godde had nine children, Max had eight, and Frank had eight. The children attended the Bellview School which housed eight grades and required an enrollment of eight pupils. Consequently, children were enrolled quite young to assure the community of a school.

Work comprised the greatest part of life, but the children managed to ride their horses at every opportunity even though it meant walking a mile and a half to the corral. There was an occasional trip to Lancaster to attend a dance, and once a year the family journeyed in their wagon to swim and picnic at Lake Hughes. On one occasion the children trapped and penned coyotes with hopes of "training" them. However, their hopes were crushed, and the coyotes had to go on the day that the chickens poked their heads into the pen and were instantly decapitated. The feathered clan was treasured not only as a source of food but as a source of income since eggs and chickens were transported and sold to the Food Shack Cooks at the active Willow Springs Mines. Work and food value was placed on most animal life rather than sentiment, and good animals were necessary in the struggle for survival. Faith entered into survival also, and every Sunday the family, with wagon full, trekked to services at the Sacred Heart Church in Lancaster.

Max and Frank Godde married German girls who were sisters. These women raised their families and worked side by side with their husbands. No hardship and no task defeated them. Fred's wife was not a typical pioneer woman and despite the fact that her views were different from most women of this era, she conducted her life in the manner in which she felt would be most beneficial to her family. Fred Godde met Mary Weber, sister of Fred Weber, (founder of Weber Showcase Co.) at a church social in Los Angeles. Upon accepting his proposal, Mary Weber informed Fred that she would be a good wife, but that she was a "city girl." This "city girl" devoted her life to her husband, her children, and her home. This home echoed with happiness although Mary Godde never so much as milked a cow. Typifying her personality, this woman imported seeds from her native Switzerland fully aware of the critical water shortage. She managed to grow the forbidden blossoms by placing them under her clothesline where they would receive the water from the family laundry. Fred Godde was a progressive man and devotedly interested in better living and better farming through organization. In the 1920's he was one of the instigators of the Farm Bureau; he belonged to the first Hay Growers Association and the first Almond Growers Association. He was a charter member of the Knights of Columbus and for years he served as clerk of the Bellview School where he worked well with his close friend, Mark Keppel, superintendent of schools.

Fred and Mary Godde were firm with their children and expounded honesty, charity, humility, and above all, faith. Fred Godde saturated his children with the faith that surmounts life's obstacles, and he exemplified this faith. He died at the age of 66 in the year 1930, and his wife died at the age of 73 in 1940.

Residing on the old Godde Ranch in Leona Valley since 1943, Kate and Kline Billet raised three boys and three girls and gave much to Leona Valley and its children. Kate having organized the Leona 4-H Club in 1944. Kate Billet is great in simplicity, honest charitable, and rich in faith.

Kate expresses particular enthusiasm in regards to one event in the valley, and that event is John McGovern's annual children's Halloween Party held at the Leona School where all potential trick or treaters are thoroughly entertained.

Just as Kate and Kline Billet will find deserved happiness in their new home in Quartz Hill, so will the huge shade trees at their old ranch remain bowed and bent; no longer the protectors of Godde pioneer lineage.

"ONE SOLITARY LIFE"

HERE IS A MAN who was born in an obscure village, the child of a peasant woman.

He grew up in another obscure village.
He worked in a carpenter shop until he was thirty, and then for three years he was an itinerant preacher.
He never wrote a book.
He never held an office.
He never owned a home.
He never put his foot inside a big city.
He never traveled two hundred miles from the place where he was born.
He never did one of the things that usually accompany greatness.
He had no credentials but himself.
He had nothing to do with this world except the naked power of his divine manhood.
While still a young man, the tide of popular opinion turned against him.

His friends ran away.
One of them denied him.
He was turned over to his enemies.
He went through the mockery of a trial.
He was nailed to a cross between two thieves.
His executioners gambled for the only piece of property he had on earth while he was dying - and that was his coat.
When he was dead he was taken down and laid in a borrowed grave through the pity of a friend.

Nineteen wide centuries have come and gone and today he is the centerpiece of the human race and the leader of the column of progress.

I am far within the mark when I say that all the armies that ever marched, and all the navies that ever were built, and all the parliaments that ever sat, and all the kings that ever reigned, put together have not affected the life of man upon this earth as powerfully as has that "ONE SOLITARY LIFE."

AUTHOR UNKNOWN

INSTITUTE OF PSYCHORIENTOLOGY, INC. Laredo, Texas

'Skunk Trouble' At Myrtie Breslin's

by Myrtie Breslin

For the sake of diversity, I will go into the subject of our wild animals here in the foot-hills and the desert.

When we came here in 1921, there were a few mountain lions still wandering around in the hills. Mr. Ward had a few goats killed by lions. He lived about half mile from Harold on the Barrel Springs road. One morning he heard a commotion out in the goat pens, and rushed out just in time to see a lion going over the fence.

The first fall we were here I heard a lion's call several times, but it was the next summer when I was accompanying a group of young folks on a hike that we saw the first one. We were on our way to see the Garcia adobe on the Fort Tejon Road. One of the boys, Bob Burke who now lives in Palmdale and myself were a short way ahead of the rest of the youngsters. Just as we crossed Littlerock Creek (now water in it) and started up a little hill, we looked back for the rest of the bunch. A moher lion and her young one crossed between the other part of our group and Bob and myself. Luck was with us, for I did not have my gun with me. In those days I hardly left the house without a gun. Had I shot and injured the mother lion she might have attacked us. They are harmless if you let them alone. Only when defending the young or if injured will they attack humans.

The same holds true of most wild animals. We have since heard their weird cry several times and about seven years ago we saw their footprints on the hill above the house. So guess they are another of our has beens.

The coyote is still with us, but not so plentiful as a few years ago. About six years ago a state trapper was trapping here in the valley, and he did too good a job of trapping, for he left few coyotes. That is the reason we have been so bothered with rabbits the last two or three years. But the coyotes are coming back for I have heard them several times this fall. I love to hear their weird call. It is almost impossible to shoot one. They seem to know if you are carrying a gun so the distance the gun will shoot to kill. We have lost quite a few cats to coyotes. They will come right into the yard to catch the cats. It seems a choice morsel for them.

Recently I heard over the air of coyotes attacking a man. This is almost as incredible as a mother sheep chewing off the tail of its new-born lamb, which I read recently in a Lancaster paper. I have lived practically all my life where there were coyotes, and never once have I known anyone having been attacked by a coyote. They may follow you for miles, but if you stop, they stop. As soon as you start again they start. No one knows why they do this, but they keep a safe distance from you. I read in a wild life magazine that there has never been proof given of a coyote ever having attacked a person.

Stewart Hammlin went coon hunting up Littlerock creek a few years ago. His dogs seemed to have lost the trail of the coon so Stewart got no coon. But there are a few coons, also a few o'possum up in the hills. Our old dog Copper killed two 'possums he found along the creek, but we have never been bothered with them.

Now we get down to being bothered, and there are some animals that do just that. Skunks are very plentiful here in the valley. The first that really impressed me was about twenty-five years ago. One night I was awakened by a peculiar odor. Soon I was wide awake. A skunk, but where? I tried to get my husband to investigate the whereabouts of Mr. skunk, but his reply was "You have always wanted a pet skunk, so here it is for you."

Nothing to do but I must find him. He had come into the kitchen from the service porch where we had a little door for the cats. He got up on the sink and I could figure no way to get him down. I put cotton on the tip of my fishing rod, and soaked it with Sloan's linament, and dabbed that on his head to no avail. I left him alone for awhile and he got down and went back into the bathroom and behind a chest.

I had propped the door open so I could get him out, but during the chasing of the skunk with the help of our dog Copper the door shut, the skunk was between me and the door. I yelled for Gene, but he was only laughing at my plight so he could tell it on me later (which he did). Finally I got back into the kitchen and got the gun and shot the skunk. Copper always buried them for us.

I could go on for ages telling these skunk stories, but will just add one more now. All fall a skunk has been coming into the porch and I could hear him thumping around, but I left him alone as he had not seemed to bother anything. But last night he kept up such a racket I could not sleep, so I finally got up and decided to kill him, knowing that just geting him out would scent up the whole place as bad as if I shot him. So shoot him I did. He was looking right at me when I started to take aim but must have turned around while I was getting a focus. I shot him in the backbone just above the tail, and not a scent. I have heard that if you hold them by the tail they cannot emit this odor. Now what I want to know is this, by shooting him in the backbone did that keep him from scenting up the place?

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Early Law Records Recalled

By MYRTIE L. BRESLIN

(ED. NOTE: This is the final article in a two-part series on one of Antelope Valley's early prominent citizens, Judge Bulkley.)

Constables elected to serve with Judge Bulkley in the early days of Antelope Valley Courts were Harry Butterworth in 1902, Oliver Litchy Mitchell in 1906, and Garfield Carter in 1910.

Carter was reelected in 1914 but resigned and H. E. Bidden was appointed in his place. When Bidden resigned Cummings was appointed to fill the vacancy.

Constable Cummings was in office when we came here in 1921 and he remained in office until his health forced him to resign many years later.

When Judge Bulkley came to Littlerock there was a large acreage of wheat in the west end, where the wheat is grown today. The valley started to be settled in the '80s and in those years there was plenty of rainfall and wheat was grown from the extreme west end of the valley along the foothills almost to Lancaster.

The east side of the valley was sparsely settled and very little raised, only small patches of alfalfa and a few fruit trees. There were quite a few settlers but they were scattered over all of the east and south side of the valley.

In 1906 more settlers started coming in and settling in the water belt, using gasoline pumps on their wells.

In the early '90s the first woman's Club was organized near Fairmont. Miss Kathryn Anderson was the leader in the cultural activities at that time and there were quite a group with her in her activities on the westside.

In 1895 Judge Bulkley helped organize an Antelope Valley Association in Lancaster. The object was to organize the people to work for the interest of the entire valley.

The group also formed the first road committee for meeting twice a year to make plans for better roads. A Mr. Sprague was president of the organization, and Walter Melick was secretary. He was associated with the Lancaster Gazette at that time.

He was also more interested in the development of the Littlerock district. Some of the other members of the first Valley Association were John Carter, A. Ruthledge, Harry Butterworth, and W. H. Holland who was county probation officer and also taught school. Another member was Mr. Oldham, who lived at Almondale.

There came an unusually dry year and many of the people from the west side moved here from where most of the members came so the organization lost many of the active members and it almost stopped functioning.

Before the dry years came, the dry lakes would fill with water every year. There were plenty of Antelopes and they were killed by the wagon load and sold to the people in the settlements.

Roney Crane, a member of the Mace Mays gang, shot and sold Antelope to the people in Lancaster. Later he "got religion" and would preach around Lancaster. One day he came into Judge Bulkley's office and was reading a big law book. He was mistaken for the other justice of the peace, an uncle of Mace Mays.

He was shot at by a man who had drawn the lot to shoot Roney, but the shot hit the book and saved Roney's life.

When Judge Bulkley retired from duty in the Antelope Township he moved to Los Angeles and was affiliated with the Los Angeles Courts until his death in 1930.

It is significant that the greater part of the time of the local county officers now is consumed with civil work. This is somewhat of a contrast to the conditions existing here in 1889 when the court records showed very little business in the civil nature but plenty of cases of petty crimes such as drunkenness, disorderly conduct, stealing rides on trains, and cattle stealing, with an occasional murder thrown in.

First 60 Families Forced to Leave When Water Fails

By ART HEWITT

Palmdale, with about 60 families, was a flourishing community in the 1880s, but it was a hard luck town.

This original town, named for the Joshua Palm, was located about two miles southwest of the present center of Palmdale, on what is now 30th Street East between Avenues R and S.

Drought hit the community, and water was not developed as promised. The properties were about paid for by 1900, but the real estate promoters could not give clear title.

Faced with such problems, most of the families killed off their pigs and chickens, salted them in crocks and migrated back across the mountains in their covered wagons, each with a family cow tied behind.

Among the last to go were the John Ritters who moved to Leona Valley. By 1906 only the Nagels were left, and their daughter, now Dora Nagel Ritter, was the only child in the old Palmdale school. They too then left, moving to what was called New Palmdale.

First Water Project Failed

An Antelope Valley pioneer, Nathaniel Cole, had a dream of bringing water to Palmdale. He built a wooden headgate in Littlerock Creek, a mile of wooden flume, two tunnels and an open ditch. But the open ditch washed out and the flume rotted away.

In 1911 a young engineer, H. Paul Schoeller, sought to revive this water project to irrigate the fertile land of the valley. A company, the Palmdale Land Co., was formed and arrangements made to take over land from the Cole heirs.

On the last day for filing claim to the water rights Schoeller and the attorney for the water company arrived in town. These valuable water rights are now owned by the Palmdale Irrigation District.

But even with water these years were slow growth years for Palmdale and the rest of the valley. At this time San Fernando Valley was being opened up, and there were vast acres still unfarmed south of the mountains.

Dam Finished, Fields Flourish

But in 1924 the Palmdale-Littlerock dam was completed, and the alfalfa fields and peach orchards began to flourish.

Palmdale had a population of 1419 in 1940, and in 1950 this had nearly doubled.

Then things began to happen. Palmdale became "Jetville." Aircraft firms moved across the mountains to the wide spaces to build and test their jet aircraft.

The Bennington Flag: Its History, Meaning and Importance.

August 1777. The struggle for independence which had begun so enthusiastically, which had seemed so promising after Lexington, Concord, Bunker Hill—that struggle was being lost.

General Burgoyne at the head of a column of British troops was moving south from Canada in a triumphal march aimed at Albany. If he split New England from the rest of the colonies, the American Revolution was almost sure to fail.

And so far he had marched almost unopposed. Fort Ticonderoga had been captured without a shot, American ships had been swept from Lake Champlain, and the way down the Hudson River lay open before him.

From Fort Edward, Burgoyne dispatched an expedition under a seasoned German commander, Lieutenant Colonel Baum, with a brigade of marksmen, a regiment of American Loyalists, a regiment of Canadian Rangers headed by 150 Indians, a force of dragoons, a troop of chausseurs and two cannons with artillerists. They were to be reinforced by another strong body of German regulars, together with two large cannons. He was ordered by Burgoyne to forage through Vermont for supplies; ". . . seize Bennington, cross the mountains to Rockingham and Brattleboro...and meet me, a fortnight hence, in Albany."

Less than a month earlier, taciturn old Colonel John Stark—he who held the line at Bunker Hill—had been recalled from a peaceful retirement at his New Hampshire sawmill and asked to raise a body of militiamen to defend neighboring Vermont.

Stark and his new recruits were waiting at Bennington when Baum's column arrived. Over their ranks flew the banner they had chosen for themselves—a symbol of their spirit of independence and the unity of the colonies—which became the first Stars and Stripes to be raised in victory over the enemy.

Under that flag, the first Stars and Stripes to be used by any of the land forces of the United States, Stark's citizen soldiers marched out to meet the might of the British Empire. The first shot was fired at 3:00 p.m. the afternoon of August 16th. By nightfall, the spirit of patriotism, the spirit that the flag symbolized, had carried the day for the American colonists with a resounding victory.

And that victory rekindled the same "Spirit of '76" in the rest of the struggling colonies, giving them new hope and new resolve. Jefferson wrote, "This success was the first link in the chain of events which opened a new scene to America. It raised her from the depths of despair. . . ."

Thus the "Bennington Flag" has an immortal significance to America. It symbolizes the ideals of our Founding Fathers, who fought and won against seemingly hopeless odds. Let us now not lose sight of their magnificent "Spirit of '76," as symbolized by the Bennington Flag—that same spirit must be reawakened throughout the United States today.

ANTELOPE VALLEY LEDGER-GAZETTE, Thursday, November 5, 1959

Antelope Valley loses valuable citizen in Dr. Alfred H. Swan

By Evan HOSKINS
Ledger-Gazette Staff Writer

Among Antelope Valley's distinguished citizens, no one has stood with more stature than Pearblossom's famed physician and surgeon, Dr. Alfred H. Swan. His death came unexpectedly Tuesday.

The cultured doctor's reputation extended from here to, literally, China, and his patients have ranged from humble pensioners living in remote desert cabins to such world figures as Generalissimo Chiang Kai-shek.

The physician changed the course of world history, at least to some extent, by saving Chiang's life in 1928.

Chiang, then president of China as well as head of its armies, was suddenly stricken with a severe hemorrhage from the socket of a tooth that had been pulled the previous day.

Dr. Swan, summoned to Chiang's home during the before-dawn hours, packed the socket and stopped the hemorrhage.

But, the doctor said, the Chinese leader had lost a lot of blood and soon would have died.

It isn't impossible, of course, to say just how history would have been changed if Chiang had not gotten the doctor's help and had died. But it is certain that leadership would have passed to other hands and that to a greater or lesser degree the course of events in the Far East would have changed.

The doctor lived in China for almost 20 years and practiced medicine there, in Shanghai, for seven years. He returned to the United States late in 1929 because of the mounting turmoil that ultimately engulfed the entire area in World War II.

Since 1948, he has been family physician to scores of Antelope Valley families, especially in the South Valley. He is known far and wide for the help he has given them, for restoring them to health after illness.

But in the valley's medical profession and among the valley's civic leaders the distinguishing thing about him was that he was the man who initiated the movement that led to the establishment of the Antelope Valley District Hospital in Lancaster.

The doctor and a group of non-medical valley residents got together at his office in May, 1949 and took the first of many long and, at times arduous steps that led ultimately to the hospital that they all knew the valley so urgently needed.

It was a hard fight. State hospital authorities literally didn't know there was such a place as Antelope Valley. But the fight was won and the hospital was built.

Dr. Swan's contribution was publicly acknowledged last summer when he was presented with one of the South Antelope Valley Co-ordinating Council's Lulu Achievement Awards for outstanding service to the area.

The Co-ordinating Council's Lulu was not the only honor bestowed upon him during the summer. Long a member of the Kiwanis Club, he was presented with a 25-year Award button and a Legion of Honor plaque by the Pearblossom Kiwanis Club at a sort of "this is your life" ceremony last June.

The doctor's medical role in the valley came about rather by accident.

When he returned to the United States from China he established his practice in Montebello, east of Los Angeles.

Incidentally, he was prominent in the operation of the Beverly Community Hospital there and in 1956 he was made an honorary life member of the board of directors.

His personable daughter, Mary L. Swan, who was his office manager and who is widely known in the south valley, moved to the desert for her health and built a cabin at the present site of the beautiful Swan home, Swan-gri-la, on Old Fort Tejon Rd., four and a half miles southeast of Antelope Hills Center.

Doctor and Mrs. Swan, also named Mary, found the cabin, with its restful and magnificent surroundings, an ideal place to spend their weekends. So they became regular weekend visitors, recuperating from the heavy practice of the week just ended and resting up for the week ahead.

But it didn't stay that way long. From Palmdale to Victorville, there was no doctor in the area and when people found out that Dr. Swan was a doctor they began showing up at the cabin.

At first there was only a few, but before long the doctor was treating 20 cases on a weekend.

He decided that the area needed his services more than Montebello did. He opened his office on Feb. 1, 1948, with an open house. Pearblossom was having one of its infrequent rains that day, but 80 persons turned out to welcome their new physician.

He became a desert family doctor, serving the vast area between Palmdale and Victorville. People came to him from miles around, with a wide assortment of illnesses and an almost equal assortment of accidents, from injuries suffered on ranches to broken legs suffered while skiing at Big Pines.

When they were too ill or too badly hurt to come to him, he went to them. Mrs. Swan helped him load his equipment into the car and off they went, sometimes to a house call miles away.

Illnesses treated by the doctor even included one case of leprosy, a disease he came to quickly recognize during his years in China. The patient was a woman who lived on a little ranch east of Palmdale. She had contracted the disease in Hawaii.

She went to the federal leprosarium at Carrville, La., and was cured. There she met and married a man leprosy victim, who was cured. Presumably, they are now living happily ever after.

The doctor would have been 76 years old on Nov. 29.

Recently he turned over his practice to Dr. Lawrence D. Evans as a preliminary to retiring.

A county nurse who worked on outside medical relief practically wailed when she heard about it. She called it the end of an era that was distinguished by a fine old type of family doctor, who never refused house calls.

The doctor was born in Nebraska, the son of Swedish immigrants.

He became interested in athletics through the YMCA at the age of 12 and it was that interest that ultimately took him to China.

He served as a 'Y' physical director while studying at the University of Nebraska and at Rush Medical College in Chicago.

A year before he completed his medical studies, the YMCA International Committee asked him to go to China to introduce athletics there.

Cont. next pg.

He didn't like the idea too much, but it did have the advantage of giving him an income that would enable him to get married. The object of his affection was a beautiful blonde who sang in a Congregational Church choir with him.

So he accepted the 'Y' post, they got married and went to China on their honeymoon. He trained the Chinese team that competed in the First Far Eastern Olympic Games in Manila in 1913.

While in Shanghai, he joined that once international city's famous Shanghai Volunteer Corps, which was made up of Americans, British, French, German, Japanese and others.

The corps stood ready to defend the French Concession and the International Settlement against any Chinese invasion. Dr. Swan rose to the rank of captain and became one of the world's top riflemen while a member of it.

He has a whole case full of medals attesting to his skill with a rifle. In 1929, he won the Grand Aggregate Prize in a shoot against "the world." "The world," in this case, meant teams entered in the competition from the various foreign warships in port.

In 1915, the doctor was instrumental in turning back for a while the aggression that ultimately led to war between the United States and Japan.

He fell into this unusual role when he went to see a government official in Peking to learn the whereabout of a tennis player the doctor wanted to see.

The official disclosed that Japan had presented 21 demands which would place China under Japanese domination. Members of the Chinese government were being held virtually prisoners by the Japanese.

The official persuaded Dr. Swan to memorize the 21 demands and carry them to the outside world. Through a press conference arranged by the American consul, news of the demands got out to a shocked world and China received the backing it needed to reject the Japanese demands.

The Swans had four "cygnets," a daughter and three sons. Mary and two of the sons, Alfred, Jr., and Frederic F., were born in China. Charles H. Swan was born in Chicago during a three-year period that the doctor was back in the United States, completing his medical training.

Alfred is an industrial engineer with his own company, the Ductall Corp., in Costa Mesa. The company manufacturers all sorts of industrial - type hose.

Frederic is a lieutenant colonel in the Air Force and Charles is an electronics engineer and designer with the Nortronics Division of Northrop. He designed the guidance system used in the Snark guided missile.

The Swan home on Old Fort Tejon Rd. is in an idyllic setting. Originally only four acres, the site has been expanded until it now takes in about 60. The living quarters are built, not as one house, but, Chinese style, as several.

There is a main building that is chiefly living room, dining room and kitchen. It is beautifully furnished and decorated in a nicely blended mixture of American and Chinese furniture and works of art.

Visitors who ask to see them are shown some of the rare pieces of jade and Chinese objects d'art collected by Mrs. Swan. She is such an expert on jade that she has been paid for lectures on the subject.

Other buildings include a studio for Mrs. Swan and sleeping quaters, a guest house and a utility house.

Miss Swan's current project is an Oriental garden, which is far enough along for it to be seen that it is going to be beautiful.

On the north end of the property there is a prominence which members of the family call their flying saucer. An easily-travelled road has been bulldozed to it and at the top of the hill a full circle has been cut.

The view from there gives the Swans and their guests an unparalleled, 360-degree view of the valley. On a clear day, it is a view that both shows how much has been accomplished in the valley and how much more remains to be done.

MY CREED

Dean Alfange

I do not choose to be a common man. It is my right to be uncommon — if I can. I seek opportunity — not security. I do not wish to be a kept citizen, humbled and dulled by having the state look after me. I want to take the calculated risk; to dream and to build, to fail and to succeed. I refuse to barter incentive for a dole. I prefer the challenges of life to the guaranteed existence; the thrill of fulfillment to the stale calm of utopia.

I will not trade freedom for beneficence nor my dignity for a handout. I will never cower before any master nor bend to any threat. It is my heritage to stand erect, proud and unafraid; to think and act for myself, enjoy the benefit of my creations and to face the world boldly and say, this I have done.

All this is what it means to be an American.

SOUTH ANTELOPE
VALLEY PRESS

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR — NO. 23 PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, Nov. 10, 1955

Pair of Palm Trees Inspired Name For Booming 'Jetville'

by Myrtie Breslin

Palmdale, where it is today, was started in 1892. The Pearland Hotel was the first building in the new Palmdale. It was a building moved from Santa Monica up here.

Old Palmdale was two miles east on Ave. R, east about a mile of the new Sage School. They had a school house and a church. Later the church building was moved over by the Palmdale reservoir.

When we came here in 1921 part of the old fence that had been around the schoolhouse was still standing, also two palm trees. There were also about four houses still standing at that time.

The Old Palmdale had consisted mostly of Germans who had come directly from Germany, and a few from Nebraska. After the people had moved from the old town, there was but one child left to attend school so they had to hire a teacher with four or five children of her own in order to keep a school.

The ditch from Littlerock creek was started in 1896 to run the water to Palmdale, and the first work on the reservoir was started in 1897. When it was finished there was a big Fourth of July celebration over its completion.

Harold had many names: Harold, Alpine Station, Herold Town, and Trego Post Office. This Post Office served all the South Antelope Valley at that time. The town consisted of about four houses. There were two saloons, two houses and a depot.

It was at Harold that Fort Tejon Road crossed the railroad and wound on around into Ana Verde Valley.

When the Big Horn Mine started in 1893 it helped New Palmdale by bringing a lot of business into the town. All supplies were bought at Palmdale and hauled as far up the mountain as the road went, then packed up to the mine by a pack train. Later a good road was built up to the mine, and held auto races on the new road. Rues and Fenner were among the contestents. Fenner ran his famous old machine called "Black Bess" in the races.

Quoting from an article Judge Buckley wrote in 1930 "The valley wasn't backward in those days. In the 90's they organized a Womans' Club near Fairmont. There were a good many cultured people living around Fairmont in those days, among them Miss Kathryn Anderson who took a prominent part in it."

Also in 1895 an Antelope Valley Association was organized for the purpose of working for the interest of the people in the valley. It was at this time that the first work was done for developing good roads for this district.

Old-Timer . . .

By MYRTIE L. BRESLIN

One of the best known old-timers was Evan Evans, who came to Palmdale in 1890 when Palmdale was two miles east on Avenue R.

They were still mining gypsum about a mile from Palmdale—near the Ice and Cold Storage plant. A man by the name of Bell did the mining and hauling.

Evan Evans worked at the Big Horn Mine in 1893. He also worked on the ditch from Littlerock Creek to the Palmdale reservoir, which was started in 1896 and finished in 1897.

In a paper written by Evan Evans, he says that the real Antelope Valley is a small place by Fairmont and that this is really the Mojave Desert.

I have tried to verify this, but have found no evidence to sustain the statement, so if anyone knows if this is a fact, please inform the Valley Press and the News-Leader.

Evan Evans was here when the Basque sheepherders brought thousands of sheep through the valley in the winter to feed. The local cattle men did not approve of the sheep being allowed to graze on the desert and foothills, as the sheep left no feed for their local cattle.

Evans also worked on the Palmdale reservoir, which was started in 1897.

According to History of the desert, we do not know what cold is.

Evans says, "In 1896 we had terrible wind storm here. Two old fellows started down to the drug store, and when they started to walk back, they took two or three steps when they started to run, and they had to go one-fourth of a mile the other side of the hotel before they could stop. Their whiskers were blown straight out in front of them and maybe you don't think they were a sight."

Another quote from Evans' paper:

"I used to kill rattlesnakes by the dozen. Once one crawled in the hole and I lit a candle and he stuck his head out and extinguished the flame. We used to get $2.50 apiece for the big ones, and we would catch them with a piece of wire and a stick."

"Another:

"One time a fellow having a little more liquor than he could

(Continued on Page 3)

(Continued from Page 1)

handle was loaded on the back of a wagon. He fell asleep and then fell off the wagon. When the men missed him they went back to find him. There were bear tracks all around, and the fellow was still sleeping untouched."

In later years Evans worked for the County Road Department. He was working for the county when we came here. He was living in Palmdale at that time. At one time he had lived in Littlerock—before 1900.

THIRTY-FOURTH YEAR — NO. 26 PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA, THURSDAY, DEC. 1, 1955 PRICE 10 CENTS

Butterfield Stage Traversed Valley

by Myrtie Breslin

The Butterfield Stage ran from New Orleans to San Francisco. It was the Butterfield Stage that ran on the Fort Tejon road from San Bernardino to San Francisco.

On the west bank of the Littlerock creek just a few feet off our northeast corner, were two cabins built by the Vasquez Brothers. These cabins were still standing when Nestor Young Jr. came to Harold in 1887.

When we came in 1921 a double fireplace of these cabins was still standing, and the complete floors of evenly laid stone were still intact for two cabins. Since then people have taken the stones for building retaining walls or fireplaces, so there is nothing to be found there now. I walked up and looked all the old grounds over for some trace of the cabins, but there is nothing.

The Vasquez Brothers and other renegade Mexicans lived there, and would hold up the stage as it came through on the Fort Tejon road about half a mile down the canyon. After the holdup they would go up the canyon about a mile and a half to just below where the Littlerock-Palmdale dam is now, and hide out until the Indians signaled them that all was clear and they could come out. The Indians would watch the activities of the sheriff and posse, and when they left the field of hunt would signal from a high hill to the robbers and they would come down to these cabins.

The legend goes that in one of these robberies the Mexican bandits took $90,000 worth of gold bullion from the stage that was taking it to San Francisco from San Bernardino to be minted.

This gold bullion is supposed to be buried somewhere in Littlerock Canyon. One day a stranger came to the door, and when I answered his knock, he greeted me by saying "Have you heard the legend of the gold bullion?" I answered yes, I had heard of it. Then he asked "Do you know where it is?"

"No I do not know where it is, although we have had people with all makes of doodle bugs here looking for the buried treasure.

Several were sure it was buried under or near a huge cottonwood tree that stood beside our house that burned down. The fire also burned the tree so badly that it died and finally fell down last spring during one of our big winds, just another old timer gone. This tree was supposed to be the biggest cottonwood tree in California. The late Mr. McKelvey of Palmdale used to bring people out to see this big tree, telling them it was the largest cottonwood tree he had ever seen, and he had seen a lot of trees.

About six years ago three men came with a doodle bug looking for the bullion. They thought they had located it at the foot of this tree. I gave them permission to dig, so they dug a hole about four feet wide and eight feet long by ten foot deep. They also burrowed under the tree, but they found no gold, or if they did they didn't tell me. But I'm sure they found none.

People looking for the treasure tore down the old Garcia adobe that stood on the bank of the Littlerock creek beside the Fort Tejon road. They found no treasure but destroyed one of the oldest landmarks in the vicinity of Littlerock.

Within the last week there were a couple of men here asking questions in regards to the buried treasure. They are comnig back with a sure shot doodle bug and find the buried gold. When? I don't know.

Banker Has No Regrets Over Socialist Colony

Corona Man Who Lost a Fortune in 1913 Movement Near Palmdale Is Now 91

BY CHARLES HILLINGER

Gentry Purviance McCorkle, Corona banker who invested his fortune in Southern California's ill-fated Socialist colony at Llano del Rio in 1913, aired his memories Wednesday at his home 2028 E Chevy Chase in the Verdugo Hills.

"I have no regrets about underwriting the venture. I am sorry it failed. I would do it again if I knew it had a chance of success," the tall, erect 91-year-old man declared with a touch of Tennessee twang still lingering in his speech.

Llano del Rio blossomed in 1913 in a blaze of publicity and promotion. It flourished on the desert 15 miles east of Palmdale for five years.

Gentry McCorkle
Times photo

Meets Lawyer

"Southern California in 1913 was a succession of soup counters," McCorkle recalled. "I wasn't a Socialist: I was a successful banker. Owned the most pretentious home in Corona."

"Then I happened to meet Job Harriman, the controversial Los Angeles attorney. He told me about his idea to organize a co-operative colony.

"I bit. Then and now I believe the profit system is wrong. I sold my interest in the bank; sold my home and invested $35,000 in the idea. My wife cried her eyes out. But I believed in what I was doing."

Twelve hundred men, women and children moved to the Socialist settlement. They built 200 homes, a 50-room hotel, a community kitchen and dining hall, an elementary school in which 400 students were enrolled.

Fee of $2,000

Colonists paid $2,000 to join. Thousands mailed $10 a month payments toward their eventual memberships. Crops were planted, irrigation ditches constructed, streets graded. There were machine shops, a sawmill, store and postoffice.

"We sold a million dollars worth of stock. But the money went almost as fast as it came in. It takes a lot of money to support 1,200 people with no income coming in.

"Lack of water, poor crops and disagreement among the nine elected directors, Job and myself killed it.

"I lost all my money underwriting the colony. Since then I've operated other banks, reaped other fortunes under the profit system I sought to defeat."

Oldtimer at AV Fairgrounds Relates Tales of Pioneers

Ah, yes, those were the good old days! Nostalgia, that bitter-sweet homesickness for the simpler pleasures of the past, was ankle deep in the press office last week.

The occasion was a two-hour interview with an old Swede who belied his 69 summers with an alert recital of colorful stories about the pioneers who started the Antelope Valley Fair and the Rural Olympics.

Les Fredeen, who has a twin brother named Wes, is a springy cricket of a man with a marvelous sense of humor. He came to the Antelope Valley in the 1920's from Minnesota. He has been a farmer and a rancher, and I got the impression that he loved his horses and a good practical joke more than he did making money.

$11,000 Loan

One pioneer who played a big role in Fredeen's memories was his friend and neighbor, the late Eric Muntz. "You won't believe it maybe, but I went out to Eric's ranch one day and told him I needed $11,000. He didn't say a word, just went down in the cellar and came back with the money, in treasury notes and cash. He didn't even ask for a note, although I got one in town and gave it to him later."

Don Jaqua, now an honorary director of the Fair Board, was the moving force behind the harvest-time fun and games, and many times when Fredeen groped for a forgotten name or date he would say, "Dang it, I wish Jake was in town so I could call him. He would remember."

With the help of two horses named Jerry and Rowdy, Fredeen walked off with first place trophies in the team pulling, team backing, team walking and hay baling contests in the Olympic farm games of the late 1930's.

Team Pulling Contest

"There was this fellow who had just come in from Madison Square Garden with a special truck for the team pulling contest, geared for horses weighing two tons or more. The idea was to load down the truck and lock the wheels. The team that could pull the most weight for six feet won.

"Well, he put 15 tons on the truck, which was a world's record established in New York, and my team just about pulled it right through the grandstand. He couldn't believe it because Rowdy was only 1860 pounds and Jerry a light 1480."

The team walking race was with rubber tired mowers once around the track. A team that broke and ran was disqualified. "I held my breath as I watched Milt Moss and his team of black mules gliding around the track, and I only beat him out by a couple of seconds," Fredeen said.

"I won the team backing contest too that year, but that was because my team wore the right kind of harness for that sort of thing. We backed wagons through the same kind of slots the trucks back through in the modern Rural Olympics."

Done By Hand

The hay baling was done by hand with one man pitching the hay into the baler and the other tying. The hay was spread in the arena the night before the event.

"It was some different then than the way they run it today," Fredeen said. "The preliminary hay baling contests were held on a neighborhood ranch, and the best balers from the Eastside met the best from the Westside in front of the grandstand.

"It was damned hard work, let me tell you, and the boys often tried a little trickery in order to win. You had to be especially careful the night before the contest. One year the Smith brothers, Milt and Dale, took turns buying me drinks until my wife told me they were trying to get me in shape so I couldn't see straight the next day."

Tug-of War

One of the highlights of the old rural games was the tug-of-war between the Eastside and Westside teams. "We used to get together at Dan Johnson's store at 70th West and I to practice. All of us were hard and strong from working in the fields all day, but we trained too because, believe me, we wanted to win."

The tug-of-war [illegible] only lost prestige, it hurt there in front of their neighbors and the grandstand crowd, they were also dragged through a pit of stinking croton oil and had to buy beer for the other team after they had gone home to take a bath and change clothes.

"We had a great anchor man in Joe Goddle. With a rope tied around his 230 bulk, he was about as easy to move as a power pole," he said.

The cow milking featured in the old games was different than you might imagine, because the cows were range cattle not used to the touch of human hands. It took two men to milk one cow — one to catch her and hold her while the other tried to milk. "It was a danged good way to get instant black and blue because she kicked in every direction at once", Fredeen said.

Beauty Contest

The beauty contest was also conducted under different rules than the present Miss Antelope Valley contest. "The girls were just as pretty, maybe prettier," he said, "but they didn't win entirely on their own merit as they do today. They won it on the number of tickets they could sell, and I know of one father who bought his girl the crown, so to speak. I think it is a lot more honest the way they do it today."

The tractor stake races for women drivers was conducted then about the same as it is today, and Fredeen's daughter was a consistent winner in this event. She is Pat Nichols, a neighbor of mine in Leona Valley.

Scandal Cleared Up

Fredeen insisted that I help clear up the scandal that tainted the first and only running of the Desert Derby, a horse race that started in Mojave and ended in front of the grandstand in Lancaster.

"Sure a horse died following the race, but that was just pure stupidity. The rider had won a race at Victorville, but he ran into some real competition in Antelope Valley. He pushed that black until he was foaming and then didn't cool him down before he took him to the water trough", he said.

"Jake set up everything possible to assure the safety of those animals. I was out at the Rosamond check point with Capt. Boyd and Vic Ryckebosch, and we made them stop there and cool down their horses for a spell. We stopped young Jack Bones, now a member of the Fair Board.

Used to the Climate

"You have to remember that those horses were used to this desert climate. That run never hurt a one of them if he was cooled down properly and treated right. I love horses and I've worked them all my life, so I know what I'm talking about."

It's a shame I can't write all the stories the old man remembered with such glee, but some of them were of a kind the present generation would probably rather forget. They didn't call it the Wild West just because of the Indians.

Hunch Pays Off

Gage Finds Lost Vein in Mine at Acton Junction

By Myrtie L. Breslin

Francis Gage has had another huch. He acted on his hunch and it looks as if it will pay off.

When the vein of gold ore was lost in the Don Mining Claim No. 1 at the Gage mines about a mile south of Acton Junction across the highway on the side of the hill, plainly seen frm Sierra Highway, Gage shut down the works.

The workers had drifted in different directions tryin gto hit the vein again, with no luck. So Gage went to Arizona for a few months, setting up machinery for other mines and looking over mining in general.

Then he came back to Southern California and started thinking of the Don Mining Claim and the lost vein of gold.

He had another hunch to go back to work with a bullhozer and take off the top of the ground where his hunch told him the vein would come near teh surface. This he followed.

Th bulldozer had worked about 10 hours when it hit the vein.

Gage and a young engineer, Jim Cowling, went to work getting out samples of the ore. The general run will bring from $50 to $60 a ton, but the high grade will bring from $60,000 to $90,000 a ton.

Mr. and Mrs. Gage are old, old friends of my late husband and me, so Francis called me on the phone last Friday to come over and spend the day with them an dlook over this new find.

I went last Saturday, had lunch with them, and we went into the claim and dug out specimens from thee vein and examined them right there, being able to see the gold in the ore by the use of miners' glasses.

Good advice for anyone going around gold diggins looking for gold is to take your own mining glasses, for it is like asking one to use his dentures to ask a miner to use his glasse, which I did. You can see I must have a stand in to do such an unhead of thing, but Francis and Jim were both brand about loaning their glasses to me, and it was certainly a thrill to see those nuggets of gold hidden in the quartz ore.

After doing our mining in the boiling hot sun we took our samples down to the house ,and in the shade we ground them up into very small pieces to pan them.

Panning gold consists of putting some of this ground oré in a small iron or steel pan. A small frying pan with the handle taken off is a fine gold pan. You run water over the ore and keep the pan in a small rotation movement so the lighter roc kwill wash off, you do this until you have most of the lighter stuff washed away Then you will see the gold trailing along as you move the pan in a circiling motion, swirling the water an dore around the edge of of the pan. You have to see it to appreciate it.

Francis gave me a lovely piece of high-grade. It would run $100,000 a ton. Sad to say, this kind of ore is scarce, but the piece I have was taken out right there before my eyes. He also gave me other specimens of the regular or. With a glass, one can see the gold.

With labor as high as it is and materials as high as they are it is almost prohibitive to operate a gold mine.

With the setup with the Government in regard to mining gold and the tax to be paid, it becomes a rich man's hobby. The profit is small.

Gage took out more than $2 million from the Governor mine, which he worked for about nine years. Gage has been interested in mining all his life, making many trips to Antelope Valley with his father, the late Henry T. Gage, who was governor of California from 1988 to 1903.

Francis remembers staying at the Pearland Hotel when it was the only business biulding in Palmdale. He was 8 or 10 at the time.

He shut down the high grade mine not only because he lost t hevein but because he could not deuend on his miners to return to work after each weekend. It seems the old-timers were great for spending their money for hard liquor, and most of the time they were not able to show up for work on Monday after a Saturday night spree. S it isn't just taking out the gold an dkeeping it. One has to know where to take it from, then where to get dependable men to work with you, not mentioning the many surance, which comes high where other incidentals, such as insurance, which comes high where explosives are used.

Also neede are materials, such as lumber, for it takes a lot of heavy timbers for cribbing to line the mine shafts and the tunnels. Steel is needed for reinforcing and then there is all the machinery required.

So I would advise a person to think twice before going into the mining business regardless of how much high grade ore he may have.

Myrtie Breslin
Rt.1 Star Box 74
Palmdale, Cal.

12-23

July 25 1957

LAKE HUGHES NEWS

Elias Munz Reports On Family's History

Antelope Valley history is tape recorded each fourth Monday evening at Lake Hughes by the neighborhood society headed by Mrs. Joseph L. Freeman. Mrs. Walter Haines operates the recorder loaned by Capt. and Mrs. Murray Orser.

Elias Munz, Elizabeth Lake, described his family's start in Antelope Valley.

His father, John, born in Switzerland, left the 500-year-old flour mills at Bettighofen on Lake Lucerne for America at the age of 19. In Chicago he met and married his wife, purchased a farm in Illinois and fathered 4 chidren before coming to California to operate a general merchandise store at Palendale, 1886.

Elias, the fifth child, was born in the new home beside the store Feb. 26, 1888. In the next 10 years 6 more brothers and sisters were born. His mother died 17 days after the birth of the last child, Lottie, in January 1898. The baby was later adopted by friends in Switzerland.

Elias said, "When I was 6 or 7, there were many nice homes around us. My first school teacher was Miss Edith Keeler."

"You know we had a tough time after my mother died Father had extended credit in his store to everyone with a hard luck story and that was everybody. Absolutely everybody in 1898. Dad came to this new colony of Palendale in 1886 with $50,000 and it was all gone."

"When my father traded his land and buildings in Palendale or Old Palmdale, for the bare land at Elizabeth Lake, to us kids it was exciting. Indians, bears, and wild game tame enough to catch, made it fun. The only trouble was, we were so poor and had so many kids and no mother, we all had to work like the dickens to grow and catch enough food to eat."

Elias sketched their daily life when he was 10 and 11, it was unrelenting work to get a start. The story of his father finding, buying, dismantling, and moving a 2-story, 4-bedroom frame house from West Palmdale to Elizabeth Lake in the summer of 1898 over cattle trails, on a squeaky flatbed wagon with 2 tired old horses, is a tale of sheer human endurance to place a roof over the head of 9 children.

The house still stands on the Munz Ranch at Elizabeth Lake. The father lived in it unti his death in 1925. He never remarried.

The Elizabeth Lake School, 3 miles east, was too far for the Munz children to walk and get home in time to help with the work. Their father was instrumental in helping establish a closer school on Lower Elizabeth Lake. The 10-pupil, 1-room school was called, West Elizabeth Lake.

The men found an abandoned building, out in the desert, horse-sledded it to its new site and opened school. The site was about where the Paul E. Jenkinson home stands on the north shore of Lake Hughes.

Mr. Munz recalls his first job in the school was to keep the water bucket full from the well at the Gentry Ranch across the road, present home of Mrs. Edwin Phillips. He has forgotten why he was changed back to the Elizabeth Lake School.

He does vividly recall the day he and Nellie Frakes were chased by a rattlesnake. Elias said he and the present Mrs. D. M. Thomson, (he was about 13 years old) were walking to school. Near the Heffner barn, the snake took after them and they both made fast tracks down the center of the dusty road.

The Heffner barn, present A. H. Bonner ranch, was the rest stop for traders and their bands of wild horses caught in the Mojave Desert. The herds numbered 100 mustangs, captured for the Los Angeles horse market.

Elias continued his story saying, "In 1906 I wanted some money of my own. I was 18 years old. Over the hill, near Fairmont, was a shell of a house. It stood where my brother Eric built his home in later years."

He went on, "This land I wanted to plow and seed to wheat was on the range of the Mexican-American Cattle Company. D. S. Doyle was the company's superintendent. He let me break up 75 acres and seed it. I camped in the shack, hauling water from Del Sur, 10 miles away."

"The horses," Munz said, "were too tired to climb the Willow Springs hill to Elizabeth Lake for water, only 6 miles distance."

"I had permission from Mrs. Cushman-Potter, New York City, owner of the land, to farm it."

"It began to snow and when my wheat came up in the spring some of the seeds made 156 stalks. Doyle and I counted many like that."

"Doyle said to me, 'Boy, the cattle will be over this way real soon. They'll eat this wheat flat. Better fence it.'" Munz said he felt sunk, then he related how Doyle told him, "Go over to Elizabeth Lake. Patrick Lavelle has willow fence posts for 3 cents each. Buy enough to go around. Dig the holes, Lay out the posts. You know young man, this 75 acres is three miles of fence to build?"

Elias said he nodded meanwhile watching and counting a band of 33 antelopes off in the distance. While counting and nodding, he realized that Mr. Doyle was asking, "Does your daddy still make Dago red?" Elias said yes and told Doyle how proud his father was of the vineyard and its wine.

Mr. Doyle sent his foreman, Joe Kirby, and a crew to string barbed wire around the 75-acre wheat patch. Elias said his first grain crop cost him about $200 and he made close to $3,000, selling the harvested grain for $1.30 a cwt.

Munz Ranch books show a carpenter cost of $2 a day in 1907. While speaking of the San Francisquito Canyon Dam disaster of March, 1928, Munz told how he and his wife, Gertrude, and constable, Fred Price, spent 3 weeks helping to identify the victims. He also said it was remarkable how well preserved a person was 'wrapped in mud and weeds.'

Elias also outlined the horse and train accident near the site of Lockheed in Burbank which almost cost the life of a neighbor. The neighbor, on his way to the Los Angeles market with a wagon load of live turkeys, and the Daylight Limited, collided at the crossing. Ever since, this crossing has been known as 'Turkey Crossing."

One hundred years ago, it is said, 1100 Indians, from different Southern California tribes, camped for three weeks in the willow grove at a spot now within Munz Lake Resort. The summer pow-wow included races and contests. Indian artifacts are uncovered from time to time. Latest discovery included 3 pieces with charcoal clinging to 2 cooking pots.

Littlerock: First Post Office, General Store, School Recalled

By MYRTIE L. BRESLIN

(ED. NOTE: This is the third in a series of articles on the history of Littlerock, prepared by Columnist Myrtie L. Breslin.)

First Post Office established in Littlerock was in 1893 and the first Post mistress was Mrs. Bonam, who recently called at the Ed Wheeler home on the old Fort Tejon Road.

Littlerock has had postal service continually since it was started.

The first store was opened in 1894, being a general country store, but as there were so few people living in and around Littlerock at that time it failed after about a year.

Mr. and Mrs. Rudolph Primmer bought land in Littlerock in 1901, but since they had no house on their land they lived in Palmdale.

Mrs. Primmer ran the Pearland hotel until their home was built in Littlerock.

They had five children– Fleeta, who lives in Portland and has lived there for 60 years; Russell, who lives in Littlerock; Lura, who is Mrs. L. A. Bones and lives with a daughter in Nevada; Alice who lives in Modesto, and Clyde, who lives in Lancaster.

Russell Primmer married Mattie Stanton, a sister of Mrs. Olf Lewis. The Russell Primmers live in Littlerock on their original homesite and in the home they built in 1921. They were married in 1915. Russell came to Littlerock in 1902, bought his land in 1910, and planted pear trees in 1911.

Mr. and Mrs. Primmer have three boys, Robert, Raymond, and Paul. Robert and his family of three boys and one girl live in Littlerock, where he, too, has pear orchards.

The first school was held in half of the old Barton Packing shed in 1912. Mattie Stanton (Mrs. Russell Primmer) was the first school teacher.

In the same year an acre of ground near Highway 138 on 77th Street East was bought for a school. A shed from out on the desert was moved onto the back of the acre and Mattie Stanton taught there until the new school house was completed for school to open Mar. 13, 1913. This was a one room school. In 1923 two more rooms were added to the school house.

The original school house was built at a cost of about $1800.

In 1928 the new Keppel Union School house was built at 8244 Pearblossom Highway in Littlerock, at a cost of about $77,000.

The school building has been revamped, new buildings added, and an entire new sewer system put in to the tune of over half a million dollars and there still are not enough rooms for full sessions of schooling.

The early years were still wet years, with plenty of grasses growing over all of the valley. Russell Primmer speaks of a goat herder by the name of Spususe, who ranged some 3000 goats along the foothills above Littlerock in 1901.

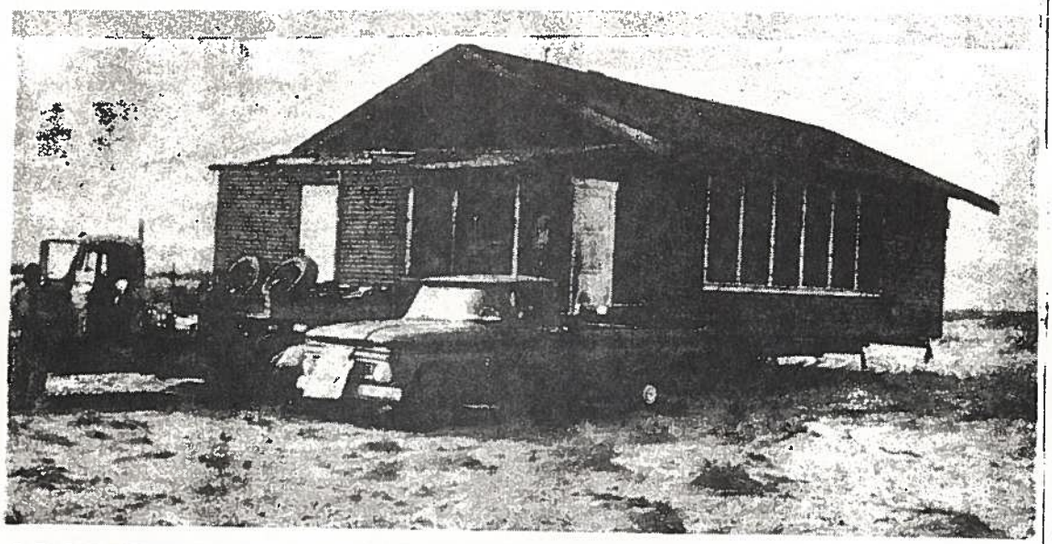
Among other old timers in the early 1900s were the Ellis boys, Frank and William Ellis, who came about 1900, and George, who came in 1915.

Frank had a homestead on Pallett Creek and ranged cattle over all of the south side of the valley above Littlerock. William and George had pear orchards.

William Ellis married Bessie Martin, a sister of Everet Martin. They had two sons and two girls. George and his wife Cecil are living on Avenue T near 90th Street East.

Frank and his wife Maud are living in San Bernardino.

Mr. and Mrs. Olf Lewis came to Littlerock in 1911 and bought orchard land. They also built the two-story store building at 72th and Pearblossom Highway. He ran the store for many years and the Post Office was in his store.



1916 WILSONA SCHOOL HOUSE TO BECOME MEETING CENTER

The Original Wilsona Schoolhouse is on its way to becoming a meeting place for the Wilsona Improvement Association.

Last Tuesday morning the L-Z Movers of Rosamond backed their trailer up to the old green building on the Wilsona School grounds on 170th Street, jacked it up onto the trailer and off they drove to the new site at Ave. N-2 and 182nd St. E which had been donated to the Improvement Association by Mrs. Emily Scofield.

The building movers reached 181st Street just south of N-4 and apparently started to unload—when it was discovered that it was the wrong site. The picture above shows the truck with its load pausing to get out of some of the Wilsona sand dunes on its way to the proper unloading spot.

The history of the building goes back to 1916 with the original passage of bonds on June 26, 1916 for $1500 to erect a one-room school house. The contract to build the school was given to W. T. Graham who returned his profits to the school for the purchase of hay for the school horses. (Ed note: apparently even then there was a problem of transporting the children to the school!)

For some reason the original school house was not built on present Wilsona school grounds but approximately 5 miles to the east. There apparently was some dissatisfaction because one night some of the local men hitched the then little red school house to their horses and moved it to the present location of the Wilsona School. A local resident related the story, telling of the amazement of the children who arrived the next morning to find no school.

The building has been used for school use until recently. When the population started to grow, the one-room building was divided into three rooms. The first increment of the present Wilsona School building complex was not dedicated until Feb. 19, 1952.

JOHN H. ROUSSELOT
24TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

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ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT

WASHINGTON OFFICE:
1706 LONGWORTH BUILDING
202-225-4206

DISTRICT OFFICE:
735 W. DUARTE ROAD
SUITE 403
ARCADIA, CALIFORNIA 91006
213-447-8125

May 11, 1972

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon
38144 North Sixth Street East
Palmdale, California 93550

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Just a note to tell you how much I have been enjoying and appreciating your wonderful manuscript of tales from the Antelope Valley.

It is a fascinating area and I am so grateful to you for providing me with this source of information.

Kind regards,

John H. Rousselot

John H. Rousselot, M. C.

JHR:dc

Shelton, what have you been up to? — your book is marvelous!! How wonderful that you thought to do it. We will read & treasure it.

Have a lovely Christmas —

Ross & Beryl Cenopaken
& Boys

MY SIDE OF THE FENCE

We are now in the great age of "safety." The federal government is setting up all kinds of regulations including an instantaneous inflatable bag to pop out of somewhere and smother you to death before you get killed in a car crash.

Ralph Nader and his rabid raiders have supreme confidence in mechanical gadgets. HE thinks it will always work when needed and NEVER when it isn't. I think the blasted thing will blow up in my face when I'm driving in the inside lane of the freeway at 65 miles per hour.

We cannot make a "foolproof" device — and we never have. Even one of our moon missiles blew up and it only had to work once. Everybody is now going to be protected by the government against everybody else and against himself. The new safety laws won't make you a better driver but you'll have lots of gadgets to play with.

A couple of years ago, I was in a busy supermarket at the lunch counter near the now-traditional electric opening doors — and the "Out" door wasn't working. I watched for almost an hour and got a glimpse of how brainwashed we are.

Most adult customers were upset and undecided. Several of them stood there and got mad. Some of them waited until a customer came through the "In" door and then they grabbed it and held it open so they could get out.

Children were wonderful — they charged up to the door and when it didn't open, they PUSHED it open.

Give us a few more years and — who knows? Maybe we won't be able to stand up or sit down by ourselves.

BERT LOWER
Kiwanis Club of Montclair

Antelope Valley Daily Ledger-Gazette, Wednesday, March 28, 1973

Antelope Valley's early history told

(Early history of Antelope Valley as compiled by students of Antelope Valley High School class of 1913. Also as submitted by Mrs. Anna Davis, former Lancaster librarian.)

The theory is that Antelope Valley, in the Mojave Desert, was once part of a vast coastal plain and, during movements of the earth's crust, this immense block, some 40 x 60 miles in extent, was dropped, or depressed about 100 feet below the surface of its plain Suspended from the surrounding mountain ranges, the valley hangs like a great sheet. The soil is the result of detrition through the ages, enriched by animal and vegetable matter, and excellently adapted by its surface formation to the application of water by irrigation.

First known inhabitants were Indians. The Piute tribe was one. As far back as 1542 these Indians might have heard of strange beasts (horses) and sailing ships when Juan Rodrigues Cabrillo sailed up the coast from San Diego. Later, in 1769, when Don Garspar de Portola and Father Junipero Serra traveled north to Monterey, via land, the Indians living inland, likely as far inland as the Antelope Valley, met sailors who had deserted from the Spanish Navy. It was in pursuit of these deserters that Lt. Pedro Fages, one of Spain's Catalonia volunteers, who had been stationed in Sonora, Mexico, joined the land expedition which left San Diego in 1772. His route was through the Imperial Valley, Cajon Pass, along the southern end of the Antelope Valley to a point between Elizabeth Lake and Lake Hughes, what is now called the Willow Springs Road. Then to the northwest over Tejon Pass on to the San Joaquin Valley. In passing through the southern end of Antelope Valley he saw trees in which Indians were lurking which he thought to be date palms. They were Joshuas.

In April 1776 Father Francisco Garces and three Indian guides from the San Gabriel Mission crossed the same trail that Lt. Fages had travelled four years earlier near Elizabeth Lake. After leaving the San Gabriel Mission he kept close to the hills to San Fernando Valley through the pass near Newhall to the Santa Clara Valley near Castaic. Then through the San Francisquito Pass to Elizabeth Lake and via the Willow Springs Pass. Instead of going northwest, as Fages did, he turned to the northeast and through the Tehachapi Pass — down Cottonwood and Tejon creeks. The first white man to traverse this trail and second to view the broad expanse of the El Tejon Rancheria of the Cuabajoy Indian Nation.

In 1824 Jediah Smith, a trapper from the Great Salt Lake, followed Garces' trail through the Tehachapi Pass on his way to Los Angeles for supplies.

In 1834, Kit Carson and General Charles Fremont came through the Valley, staying long enough to establish what is known as Fort Tejon Road, parts of which are in use today.

In 1850 General Edward F. Beale and his companions passed along the old Spanish Trail. Travelling west along the foothills to Tejon Pass, he was most favorably impressed with the Valley. Wild game was to be seen everywhere in abundance and at Elizabeth Lake, ducks and geese were so numerous that three were killed with one rifle shot. Grass and desert growth was most luxuriant and pools of water stood in places over the Valley floor. First settlers in the area chose as their homesites, the Elizabeth Lake region and the foothills of the Tehachapis. Nearest neighbors on the north were at Visalia; on the south, at the town of Los Angeles with its population numbering 2,000.

In time this great area became the highway of overland travel. Through this contact the true character of the desert gradually became better known. Underground waters were discovered, the desert's possibilities were recognized, settlement was begun, and the hidden resources of the country were brought to light.

With the growth of population, distinctive names were applied to different parts of the desert and the area extending along the north side of the San Gabriela and San Bernardino ranges in the southwestern part of the desert became known as Antelope Valley because of the immense herds of antelope then inhabiting it. The antelope herds were decimated by the severe winters in the late 1800's and by thoughtless hunters. Few people now living in Antelope Valley have ever seen one of the graceful, fleet-footed animals.

Cattle raising was the big industry in the Valley for many years, with thousands of head grazing in the lush knee-high grasses. Homesteads began to be taken up here and there wherever surface water was found to be available and, as the true character of the desert became known, immigration steadily increased. Dry years proved great setbacks but a few wet seasons wiped out their memory and, with the slow but sure arrival of capital and scientific management, a wonderful future was assured.

Early in the 1900's, gasoline engines appeared on ranch wells and the alfalfa era was born. Artesian wells had served for many years, but did not deliver a sufficient volume of water for the quick irrigation of large plantings.

With the reclamation of this wonderful Valley came the founding of Lancaster, and its growth as the principal center of activity.

The Southern Pacific Railroad was completed on September 6, 1867 between San Francisco and Los Angeles. The rails had been placed near Lang, in the Soledad Canyon, from Los Angeles, as had those from San Francisco. Dignitaries from the north and from the south met at this spot and a golden spike was driven where the two rails met, after a frantic race between two teams of Chinese Coolies to complete the track in time.

In 1882, Mr. M.L. Wicks, known throughout Southern California as the Napoleon of the Real Estate Game, started a Scots Colony of about 150 persons in the Valley. In 1884, he purchased sixty sections from the railroad company for $2.50 per acre, laying out a townsite. Until this year there were no houses on the present site of Lancaster except the Southern Pacific section and pump houses and a store. Availability of water and the fact that at this point where the county road crossed the Southern Pacific tracks, was so central for the Valley, made Mr. Wicks foresee the prospects of a town springing up. Being a native of Lancaster, Pennsylvania, Mr. Wicks named his new city for his former home and many streets he also named for those in Lancaster, Pennsylvania.

Encouraged by Mr. Wick's example, numerous corporations and private individuals undertook the colonization of the entire Valley. The year 1886 promised a great boom for Lancaster. Settlers came pouring into the region. The Antelope Valley Gazette was established. In the summer of 1888, Mr. Wicks sold the townsite, with the exception of a few lots and blocks for $46,620.00 or about, 20,000.00 lots, so that the average price was less than $7.00 each.

In 1874 the present Western Hotel, then known as the Gilwyn, was built. The year 1890 found Lancaster and the Antelope Valley in a very prosperous condition. Land seekers and settlers came in large numbers and many families of means settled in the eastern end, most with the intention of raising grain and deciduous fruits.

In 1898 gold was discovered in Rosamond. It had been discovered about 40 years earlier, but not in sufficient quantities to make mining worthwhile. The miners working it used to sail across Dry Lake going to and from work on a "V" shaped wagon rigged with sails. In the same year Borax was found in the mountains surrounding the Valley, this being just one year after the discovery of Borax in the United States.

In the middle 1930's the airplane came to the Valley. The Air Force started testing operations in a small way at Muroc Dry Lake, now Edwards Air Force Base. During World War II, a huge wood battleship was built on the lake to train bombardiers in the use of their bombsights. The ship is now gone and the lake bisected by runways capable of handling the heaviest planes built.

Elizabeth Lake settler tells of early times

By ELINOR BURKE

Lancaster and Palmdale are not in what was originally known as Antelope Valley, Mrs. Nellie Almeda Frakes Thomson of Lake Hughes, will tell you.

Back in the early days when hardy pioneers were fending off Indians and an ominous assortment of wild animals, great herds of Antelopes roamed west of the Antelope Hills at Fairmont and the area called Antelope Valley.

The country around the sites later occupied by Lancaster and Palmdale was known as the Mojave Desert.

Mrs. Thomson makes her home on an 160-acre portion of the original Frakes ranch near Lake Hughes where she was born.

Her memories of early day doings here are bolstered by tales told by her father and by her aunt and uncle, pioneers to a new land.

She has obtained dates from homestead patent grants and deeds and from Ledger Gazette columns dating back to 1889 when the publication was known as the Lancaster Gazette.

Almeda Frakes, Mrs. Thomsson's aunt, came to California from Texas in 1849, a covered wagon trek which cost her mother's life. Her father lost his life in an uneven altercation with a grizzly bear in Merced County.

Almeda became Mrs. Samuel H. T. Frakes at the age of 16, marrying the stalwart youth who hauled the lumber from Mariposa County to build Fort Tejon on the Ridge Route in 1854.

After a year of marriage, the young couple sold their California holdings with the idea of locating in Arizona, driving their cattle through Grape Vine Pass to the vicinity of Elizabeth Lake.

It was at this point a passing stranger warned them of the unpleasant activities of Chief Geronimo who was waxing prosperous through the expedient of driving off cattle and scalping the presumptuous white men who came to claim them.

When a Mexican told the young Frakes he could show them land near Del Sur where water rose to within 10 feet of the surface, they abandoned the Arizona pilgrimage to remain where they were.

In the ensuing years, the Frakes herds outgrew the original location, and additional watering places were established at Watchorn Wells, Indian Wells and Buckhorn Springs.

They covered an area streaching from 30 miles east of Lancaster (to be to the Tejon Ranch. In the summertime, their cattle roamed in Bouquet Canyon and on the Sierra Paloma Monutains dividing Bouquet and Mint Canyons.

Then came one of the great California droughts, of several years duration, and a resulting high mortality rate for cattle.

This was before the Southern Pacific stretched its tracks across the Valley floor in 1876 but settlers were finding their way into the area.

The Frakes decided to homestead land at Elizabeth Lake and with nephews, including Frank, Mrs. Thompson's father, established a ranch extending from the west end of Elizabeth Lake, now the Munz Ranch, to the hills south of Del Sur, now the Foothill Ranch.

Two parcels of land separating the ranch are now owned by Al Bonner and Charles Kellogg.

Frank Frakes returned to his home in Adel, Iowa, in 1885, married, and returned to establish a ranch on what is now known as the Edgewater Ranch.

Mrs. Thompson was their oldest daughter, and remembers her father telling about the coming of the railroad and the resentful Indians who attempted to stop the snorting black monster of an engine by stretching a rope across the tracks.

Frakes also reminisced about a man named Wicks who first established Willow Springs and then subdivided the town of Lancaster. Wicks offered Frakes five lots on what is now Lancaster Blvd. in return for a favor.

But Frakes, seeing no future in dusty windswept Lancaster, refused them. The lots were selling for $25 a piece.

Newhall was the provision point then and cattle took two weeks to drive through San Francisquito Canyon and through San Fernando Valley.

Samuel Frakes with the help of neighbors established the first school at Elizabeth Lake. Schools occupied three sites on the Frakes ranch over the years, and none were deeded to the Elizabeth Lakes School district until Mrs. Thompson and her husband signed a deed on Nov. 29, 1958, with the present school district.

Among the settlers who occupied the Lakes area along with mountain lions and many a grizzly bear the Hunters, the Revis, the Andradas Riveras, Mayets, Errachous, Canous, Heryfords and Roany Cranes.

The Thompson's 160 acre ranch was homesteaded and received patent number 15 in 1864. Patenting was accomplished by Captain Jesse D. Hunter who led the first government troops into the city of Los Angeles in 1848.

As Ward Bond's counterpart, he led the first wagon train of immigrants to Los Angeles from the east.

He is an ancestor of Eugene Biscailuz and of a latter-day Jesse D. Hunter who became a colorful Los Angeles district attorney.

Littlerock: Development of Orchards Important Period

By MYRTIE L. BRESLIN

(ED. NOTE: This is the fourth in a series of articles on the history of Littlerock prepared by Columnist Myrtie L. Breslin.)

From 1900 to 1915 there were many persons coming into Littlerock and buying up orchard land to plant pear trees.

Among some of those who came during that time and remained to become successful pear growers were L. A. Bones and his brother George.

Lou came first, about 1906, as a laborer and worked for L. W. Traver, who owned the corner property on 77th Street East, which now belongs to the Martins.

Traver also ran what was known as the Guest House of Littlerock, or hotel. Mrs. Edith Martin has the old guest book that Mr. Traver kept.

Then Lou worked for a Dr. Pratt, who owned what is now the Carr property. It was while working for Dr. Pratt that Lou saved enough money to buy his first 10 acres of pear trees on 77th Street.

George arrived in 1910 and bought orchard land and is still living in Littlerock shipping pears every year from one of the largest packing sheds in Littlerock.

Working with him in the pear industry are his three sons, Don, Jack, and George Jr. They also have pear orchards, and Don has peaches and cherries. They have taken and still are taking an active part in civic affairs.

The Bones' orchards are run with the latest equipment.

The old ladder days for pruning are gone. They now have what is called the Squirrel. It is self propelled with a platform, which raises or lowers at the operator's will.

With the equipment they can prune at a much faster rate than when they had to move ladders from tree to tree and around the trees.

Among other old timers who came during this time but who have moved on for one reason or another are the Glendennings. They had pears just east of the bridge on Pearblossom Highway.

Across the street from them were the Wells' orchard, which has been pulled out and olives have been put in.

The Kling property was at Pearblossom Highway and 77th Street, but the trees have been pulled.

In about 1922 or 1923 blight hit the pear trees. At that time no remedy was known. In fact they didn't even know what caused the blight. One would walk through the orchards and everything would be fine, but within an hour the blight could strike and the leaves on the trees would start to turn black and wither.

The orchardists would have to work fast and cut out all the striken branches to keep the sap from running into the good wood of the tree. Some of the orchards were litterly cut away.

It would take two or three years of growth to grow the trees back to production, so some of the orchardists became discouraged and left.

But the old timers who stayed on and helped fight the blight have lived to see it conquered, since now they have a spray which is put on before the blight has even struck and there just isn't any more blight.

Some of the newer fruit growers who came after 1920 are Jim and Frank Carr, Frank Southard, A. K. Sweet, Al Ohneck, and Fran Bergan. There are others who have come in more recently.

Many of the growers, aware of the fine soil and water conditions in the district are enlarging their orchards, especially with peaches. Besides the pears grown in the district, which are the finest in the world—not only for taste but also sugar content and keeping qualities — the peaches grown here are also of the finest quality and flavor.

Indians Made Home In Buttes

By MYRTIE L. BRESLIN

About 25 miles east of Lancaster are the Piute and Lovejoy Buttes. The buttes are a weird formation of piles of rocks. They rise from the desert floor of sand and look like the rocks had been dumped there in huge piles.

In and near the buttes archaeologists have found artifacts which indicate that different tribes made the district their headquarters in past centuries. They also have gathered evidence that the desert tribes conducted trade with other Indian tribes from the ocean front.

The Indians were drawn to the buttes because from the granite walls, uptilted by great earthquakes, there strangely flowed sweet springs which seemingly never dry up.

Lovejoy Lake is an artificial lake. A dam was put in to hold back the water from the springs.

Lovejoy Buttes and Springs were named for the first man to own the land as a cattle ranch.

There were at one time Indian villages all through the buttes. Aarden Edwards, who built the Yato Kyo museum on the side of the Piute Butte, operated the museum for years, then because of health it was sold and turned into a dude ranch, but later it was again run as a museum, but many of the fine relics that Arden Edwards had collected were removed.

The Yato Kyo museum was built on the side of a Piute village. It abounds in Indian lore, and Indian relics may still be discovered in the rocks and caves of the butte, which circles the old museum on the north.

While Arden Edwards was operating the museum, he wrote a play. The locale of the play was Piute Butte. The council chambers, which were originally used by the Indians, were located just above and back of the museum. The name of the play was the "Flaming Arrow."

Some of the actors were students from Los Angeles High School where Edwards taught during school term. But most of the actors and actresses were local people. Most of the old timers from Littlerock, Llano, and Pearblossom had some part in the play.

It was so well advertised that people came from all parts of the United States to see the play. In time, by being so far out in the desert and since he roads were not so good and because Mr. Edwards' health was failing, he had to discontinue the play.

The museum is one of the most interesting buildings one could visit. It is built on the hillside. The stairway leading from the large reception room to the museum is cut out of the rocks winding up the hill. At the base of the stairway, solid rock, is a fish pool wih running water over the rocky ledge, a very picturesque setting.

Hunting Attracted Indians

By MYRTIE L. BRESLIN

Before the coming of the white man, Antelope Valley was the camping ground of the wandering Indian tribes attracted by the hunting, of which marvelous stories are told.

The ducks, geese, and other wild fowl are said to have been so plentiful that human conversation was almost impossible while vast herds of deer and antelope roamed the plains.

A favorite encampment was at Love Joy Springs in the buttes, 25 miles east of Lancaster. Here have been found quantities of interesting stone implements apparently kept there in readiness from one season to another.

The old Hogan and Indian Springs a few miles south of Palmdale and the painted rocks on the Shea estate tell an interesting story of vanished life.

The first white man to enter Antelope Valley was a Franciscan padre traveling from his home mission in Arizona to the coast missions.

Others of note to cross the Valley were Jeddiah Smith, a trapper in 1827; General J. C. Freemont in 1844, and five or six years later a group of survivors from a huge emigrant train, which had left the well-traveled trails to attempt a short cut to the coast across Death Valley.

During the Spanish period flocks of sheep and cattle were driven through the Valley to the grazing lands of the San Joaquin in the summer and back again in the winter grazing in Southern California.

Gradually settlers began to come in and with the laying of the Southern Pacific tracks in 1876 development may be said to have really started.

During this time great herds of cattle ranged through the Valley, a succession of wet years producing luxuriant crops of wild grasses, often waist deep, and Antelopes were still found in huge bands.

In 1883 the cowboys — out of curiosity — rounded up a bunch of the Antelopes and counted 7000.

The following year, the wettest year in the records of Southern California, a tremendous snowfall took place in the Valley. Three feet of snow lay over the Valley, the country being white from the Ridge to Death Valley for a period of six weeks.

When the snow finally melted, great bands of antelope and deer disappeared with it, thousands meeting their death through freezing and starvation. The few survivors were depleted by hunters, but small bands were seen at intervals up to 1930.

Southwest of Antelope Valley and over a chain of hills which rise in easy steps to the higher pine-covered hills lies a long narrow valley. In its western end are two lakes, which catch the flood waters of the rainy season.

Ritters Pioneer Settlers

by Myrtie Breslin

With winter here and pipe lines not wrapped, and the roof having to be repaired, we have just been so busy fixing up for our enjoyment of winter that we almost forgot we are to be to press early.

Among those early settlers at old Palmdale were Mr. and Mrs. Emmanuel Ritter, an uncle and aunt of William G. (Bill) Ritter. Their home was by the Palm trees. They had put all their money into their home at Palmdale, so when it was found there would be no water for the little town they had to leave.

They cured all the meat from the animals they had and with as much of their household goods as they could take in a covered wagon, they started out with their children to go to the other side of the mountains. They landed in Inglewood, and at that time a lot of celery was being raised in that vicinity, so they went to work in the celery fields. Later they moved to Riverside and lived there the rest of their lives.

Mr. and Mrs. John G. Ritter were also residents of old Palmdale. They are the parents of the Ritter Brothers who have been in the cattle business in Leonis Valley for years, also the parents of Mrs. Frank Ikeler and Mrs. Buddy Redman.

Their home was the old two-story house that was still standing when we came here at Old Palmdale.

The Munz family also lived there. Eli went to the old Palmdale school. They left there and went to the Elizabeth Lake district where their interests are still centered although Mr. and Mrs. Eli Mund live at Sherman Oaks.

I am not a perfectionist in any sense of the word, so from time to time I may make mistakes in places, names or dates. I check and recheck information I get in regards to this history of Antelope Valley so that it may be facts as nearly as is possible. So if you find an error, and if it is of enough importance to this history, I will appreciate it if you will correct me by writing or phoning me.

One of the first to perceive the advantages of the location was a Mexican, Don Pedro Andrada. Weary of the political turmoil in his native land, Don Pedro came to California in search of peace. Taking the old San Joaquin road up the steep bed of San Francisquito creek, he looked down upon this peaceful scene as he came down the northern flank of the watershed and made up his mind promptly that this would satisfy his dreams, for he settled at the very exit of the pass.

He built himself an adobe home surrounded by tall trees, which was a landmark for many years. He lived there until he was 96. He died in 1925.

Near the Andrada home was another picturesque home built by Senora Ruiz, and near the summit of the divide are the ruins of the Juan De Cells domicile.

To the east a Basque, Miguel Leonis, had holdings so extensive that his name was given to the entire valley, and "Leonis" it is called to this day by old timers in perference to the inapplicable "Leona," which some quirk of fate has recently tacked onto it.

Among the '49ers who made the overland trip was a man named James Hefner, of German birth, who drove his ox cart over the San Francisquito trail and took up residence on the borders of Elizabeth Lake.

Hefner married a daughter of Senora Ruiz and for decades their place was one of the most important stations on the old stage line which passed them before it climbed the northern range of hills and forked, one branch turning west to the Tejon and the other north through Willow Springs to Owens Valley and the mining districts.

Here stopped the 20-mule teams on their way to and from the famous Borax mines. General Beale also stopped here with his celebrated camel train, and here also was General Phineas Banning of Wimington fame, the most renowned of local stage drivers, who is said to have established the record for speed on the Los Angeles to Bakersfield run.

In the Hefner family many fascinating relics of those days are preserved. Among them are an old stage coach with leather springs, the collar bells that the leaders wore, the silver chimes, which announced their approach over long distances; intricate silver mounted bridles with marvelous reins of braided horse-hair, horse-hair lariat, and strange spurs with age blackened leather trimmings.

Another '49er also chose this haven, Samuel Frakes crossed the plains with an ox team and settled near Mariposa. Driving a herd of cattle in the early '70s to the southern part of the state he reached the lakes and decided to stop right there.

He was followed a decade later by his nephew, Frank Frakes.

Around 1930 Frakes and his wife won a prize for being the married couple with the longest continuous residence in Antelope Valley.

Others of that period were the Maxwells, who settled at the mouth of Elizabeth canyon, the LeVells, the Mayets, and the Eratchades.

Probation Camp to Be Named in Honor of AV Pioneer John Munz

By DOROTHY STRANDBERG

The late John Munz, pioneer Antelope Valley merchant postmaster, poet, insurance agent, rancher and father of 11 children, will be honored this summer. The Junior Probation Camp in Elizabeth Lake Canyon, 4 miles south of Lake Hughes, will be named in his honor.

Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors accorded the honor to the late Munz at the suggestion of Supervisor Warren M. Dorn.

Born July 21, 1848, in Switzerland, Munz visited the 1867 Paris Exposition. The family flour mills, in the family 500 years, no longer interested the youth. He accepted his patrimony and sailed for America.

In Chicago he met and married Amalia Tishhouser. His bride was born and raised 15 miles from his own birthplace. The newlyweds purchased a farm and settled in Odell, Illinois, where Emil, 1881; Ingebord, '83; Martha, '84; and Molly, '86, were born.

Palendale Colony in California, established July 16, 1866, advertised for settlers. Offered a 20-acre plot in the new town of Palmdale, Munz agreed to bring his family West and opened a general store, by the fall of 1886.

Impatient to be on his way West, Munz sold his prosperous farm, stock and implements by lottery. Unknown to him this was illegal in Illinois.

He made arrangements for his wife and family to follow on the 'cars' as soon as the house was ready. The young husband, packed, ready to go, stood at the back door bidding his wife farewell. Someone knocked on the front door. Thinking it a neighbor wanting to talk, Munz left.

Months later Munz heard the law came in the front door to forbid the lottery as he went out the back door, to California.

A few months later Mrs. Munz and the children stepped off the coal-burning Southern Pacific train at Alpine, 2 miles west of their new home. (Travelers provided their own food, cooked it on stoves furnished by the line, and carried their own bedding, spread at night on wooden benches.)

Munz had a 7-room and basement home ready for his family. The new store, named Palmdale Mercantile Store, with living quarters above, was open for business.

Supplies carried in the store included everything a new settler might need and even a few luxuries. Groceries were purchased from Hass-Baruch in Los Angeles, shipped to Alpine on the railroad and hauled with a wagon to Palmdale. Arbuckle coffee, roasted beans, was 25 cents a pound. Each customer ground his own at home. Good shoes were $1.75. White flour was $4 per barrel, (4 sacks or 400 pounds.) Families made their own bread.

Elias Munz was the first child born in Palmdale, Feb. 26, 1888. Twins, Eric and Astrid, followed in 1890, twin boys born a year later died in infancy. Arnold was born in 1893 and Lottie in January, 1898. The mother died 17 days later.

Mrs. Munz, age 38, was buried in Palmdale Cemetery on Avenue S, within walking distance of her home.

The baby, Lottie, almost two years of age, was adopted by friends in Switzerland and left New York for her new home Dec. 14, 1899, accompanied by her eldest sister, 16 year old Ingebord.

John Munz, postmaster, received the mail at Alpine, 2 miles away. Once, for some reason forgotten by the family, he left at dusk to walk to Alpine for the mail bag. He carried a heavy walking stick. Attacked by wolves, the former Swiss miller backed up to a huge yucca and beat off the brutes until sunup.

By now there were a few buildings near the railroad tracks and the new town was called, West Palmdale. People began to call Palmdale, Old Palmdale.

Water for the Palmdale settlement came from the Little Rock Creek. An irrigation ditch ran in front of the Munz store and home. Their store also had a well dug by hand, by Jake Hinterman; square, 200 feet deep and topped with a typical wooden-armed Holland windmill.

Settlers made their own Dutch-type windmills. During a dry spell every one hauled water from the Munz well. Once, it too went dry. Then water was hauled from Barrel Springs, 2 miles away.

About this time two brothers began to bu yland making the water assessments on the Little Rock Creek so high, families became uneasy and began to move out.

The store, post office and home were busy places. Munz wrote insurance for The Firemans Fund. (Continued by his son Elias. The company notified Elias Munz in 1958 he held the oldest single-name agency in the United States, 76 years continuous service.)

Storekeeper Munz, jolly, nearly 6 feet tall with a full beard and blue eyes, extended credit to everyone. As a widower with 9 children, hard times and no money, he found he had a real problem.

Jackrabbits were plentiful, feeding on the patch of lawn Mrs. Munz had kept green and lush. The sons trapped rabbits, gathered dead yucca and greasewood for fuel. Venison was occasionally urchased from the Indians at Kentucky Springs. Pedro Andrade, Elizabeth Lake, traed apples for staples, and Munz learned of the good land around Elizabeth Lake with an abundance of water.

Years later Munz told his children it was a tremendous decision to trade, even, his 20-acres with home and store, for the 160 acre Pierre Vysette piece of ground at the west end of Elizabeth Lake, reached by cattle trails.

April, 1898, the young widower and his 9 children moved to their new land. They camped under a tree while a West Palmdale house was purchased, dismantled, hauled to Elizabeth Lake and re-assembled. It stands today, just east of the family home. John Munz lived in this home until his death.

The older children worked away from home for $15 and $20 a month, sending their earnings home to papa. First he purchased a cow, then an old horse. Each year something permanent was purchased or planted. The vineyard was set out in 1900. The apple orchard in 1910 and first room of the current home in 1906.

This room, 30 by 40 feet in size, was used for social gatherings by the 1500 workers on the Los Angeles Aqueduct between 1909-1912.

Munz became postmaster for the Elizabeth Lake region Feb. 15, 1906, continuing postal service for Elizabeth Lake established by the Postmaster General in August, 1878.

Munz, aided by all his children, soon had a firm footing. They raised truck crops, grain and beef. Corn and sorghum wer sold to Samuel T. Frakes of the Elizabeth Lake Ranch, for cattle feed.

Script was used for money during the 1907 panic. That fall Munz had a bumper crop of potatoes and pumpkins. The Los Angeles Times Farm and Tractor section featured the huge 1923 apple crop picked at Munz Ranch.

The west end of Elizabeth Lake, never included in the original Elizabeth Lake Ranch of Samuel Frakes or the lakeside holdings of his nephew, Frank Frakes, was saved for the public by Mr. Munz. It happened this way:

A one-legged man filed a homestead on dry Elizabeth Lake in 1900. Mr. Munz protested to E. L. Barrett, Public Land Custodian in San Francisco. The land office made their investigation and ruled that Elizabeth Lake, dry or full of water, would remain public property.

Molly Munz was the family housekeeper in the early years, succeeded by Astrid and Ingebord until Elias married and brought his bride home in April, 1914.

Poetry was his hobby. His European background is reflected in his work. He wrote a lengthy poem in honor of Mr. and Mrs. R. P. Shea, builders of the Shea Castle in the hills near Fairmont. The poem was read at a barbecue held at the Munz Ranch for all the workmen and their families in June 1929.

John Munz died Dec. 16, 1925, and was buried beside his wife.

Every day Mr. Munz cut some stove wood, singing all the time. The family offers this story of his character: One night at the dinner table, the unexpected death of a neighbor was being discussed. Concensus was that the person was no good, and never be missed.

After everyone had their say, Mr. Munz who had a good word for everyone, looked around the table and said, "He was a very good whistler."

Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery

SAN MARINO, CALIFORNIA 91108

MARCH 23, 1972

DEAR MR. GORDON:

On behalf of the Henry E. Huntington Library and Art Gallery I acknowledge your kind gift with many thanks.

Robert O. Dougan
Librarian

MR. JOHN SHELTON GORDON
38144 NORTH 6TH STREET EAST
PALMDALE, CALIF. 93550

INCREDIBLE TALES OF THE ANTELOPE VALLEY PIONEERS
COMPILED BY J. SHELTON GORDON, 1971

Antelope Valley College

Antelope Valley Joint Junior College District

December 20, 1971

3041 West Avenue K
Lancaster, California 93534
Telephone (805) 943-3241

Mr. and Mrs. J. Shelton Gordon
P. O. Box 340
Palmdale, California 93550

Dear Mr. and Mrs. Gordon:

I wish to thank you for your thoughtfulness in sending a copy of your Incredible Tales to the Roy A. Knapp Library.

I am sure that the book will be a valuable addition to the Library.

Sincerely,

Lois Hughes 11.4
(Mrs.) Lois Hughes
Head Librarian

LH:nsp

Palmdale Board of Realtors, Inc.
P. O. BOX 147, PALMDALE, CALIF. 93550

May 4, 1972

Mr. J. Shelton Gordon, Realtor
38144 N. 6th St. E.
Palmdale, CA 93550

Dear Mr. Gordon:

I wish to thank you belatedly for Incredible Tales, Stories, Letters, and Reminiscences of some of the South Antelope Valley Pioneers which you presented to the Board office. The stories and pictures are truly fascinating.

You and Mrs. Gordon are to be commended for contributing to the preservation of historical information about our area.

Sincerely,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Jacobs
Executive Secretary

EDJ/bw

Palmdale High School
2137 East Avenue R
PALMDALE, CALIFORNIA 93550
Telephone (805) 947-3181
ANTELOPE VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL DISTRICT

April 19, 1972

Mr. J. Sheldon Gordon
38144 Sixth Street East
Palmdale, California 93550

Dear Mr. Gordon:

Please accept my sincere thanks and appreciation for the copy of Incredible Tales of the Antelope Valley Pioneers.

The book was received Wednesday, April 19, 1972.

Sincerely,

Dorothy S. Collins

Mrs. Dorothy S. Collins
Librarian

Elizabeth Lake settler tells of early times

By ELINOR BURKE

Thursday, February 26, 1959

Lancaster and Palmdale are not in what was originally known as Antelope Valley, Mrs. Nellie Almeda Frakes Thomson of Lake Hughes, will tell you.

Back in the early days when hardy pioneers were fending off Indians and an ominous assortment of wild animals, great herds of Antelopes roamed west of the Antelope Hills at Fairmont and the area called Antelope Valley.

The country around the sites later occupied by Lancaster and Palmdale was known as the Mojave Desert.

Mrs. Thomson makes her home on an 160-acre portion of the original Frakes ranch near Lake Hughes where she was born.

Her memories of early day doings here are bolstered by tales told by her father and by her aunt and uncle, pioneers to a new land.

She has obtained dates from homestead patent grants and deeds and from Ledger Gazette columns dating back to 1889 when the publication was known as the Lancaster Gazette.

Almeda Frakes, Mrs. Thomsson's aunt, came to California from Texas in 1849, a covered wagon trek which cost her mother's life. Her father lost his life in an uneven altercation with a grizzly bear in Merced County.

Almeda became Mrs. Samuel H. T. Frakes at the age of 16, marrying the stalwart youth who hauled the lumber from Mariposa County to build Fort Tejon on the Ridge Route in 1854.

After a year of marriage, the young couple sold their California holdings with the idea of locating in Arizona, driving their cattle through Grape Vine Pass to the vicinity of Elizabeth Lake.

It was at this point a passing stranger warned them of the unpleasant activities of Chief Geronimo who was waxing prosperous through the expedient of driving off cattle and scalping the presumptuous white men who came to claim them.

When a Mexican told the young Frakes he could show them land near Del Sur where water rose to within 10 feet of the surface, they abandoned the Arizona pilgrimage to remain where they were.

In the ensuing years, the Frakes herds outgrew the original location, and additional watering places were established at Watchorn Wells, Indian Wells and Buckhorn Springs.

They covered an area streaching from 30 miles east of Lancaster (to be to the Tejon Ranch. In the summertime, their cattle roamed in Bouquet Canyon and on the Sierra Paloma Monutains dividing Bouquet and Mint Canyons.

Then came one of the great California droughts, of several years duration, and a resulting high mortality rate for cattle.

This was before the Southern Pacific stretched its tracks across the Valley floor in 1876 but settlers were finding their way into the area.

The Frakes decided to homestead land at Elizabeth Lake and with nephews, including Frank, Mrs. Thompson's father, established a ranch extending from the west end of Elizabeth Lake, now the Munz Ranch, to the hills south of Del Sur, now the Foothill Ranch.

Two parcels of land separating the ranch are now owned by Al Bonner and Charles Kellogg.

Frank Frakes returned to his home in Adel, Iowa, in 1885, married, and returned to establish a ranch on what is now known as the Edgewater Ranch.

Mrs. Thompson was their oldest daughter, and remembers her father telling about the coming of the railroad and the resentful Indians who attempted to stop the snorting black monster of an engine by stretching a rope across the tracks.

Frakes also reminiscesed about a man named Wicks who first established Willow Springs and then subdivided the town of Lancaster. Wicks offered Frakes five lots on what is now Lancaster Blvd. in return for a favor.

But Frakes, seeing no future in dusty windswept Lancaster, refused them. The lots were selling for $25 a piece.

Newhall was the provision point then and cattle took two weeks to drive through San Francisquito Canyon and through San Fernando Valley.

Samuel Frakes with the help of neighbors established the first school at Elizabeth Lake. Schools occupied three sites on the Frakes ranch over the years, and none were deeded to the Elizabeth Lakes School district until Mrs. Thompson and her husband signed a deed on Nov. 29, 1958, with the present school district.

Among the settlers who occupied the Lakes area along with mountain lions and many a grizzly bear the Hunters, the Revis, the Andradas Riveras, Mayets, Errachous, Canous, Heryfords and Roany Cranes.

The Thompson's 160 acre ranch was homesteaded and received patent number 15 in 1864. Patenting was accomplished by Captain Jesse D. Hunter who led the first government troops into the city of Los Angeles in 1848.

As Ward Bond's counterpart, he led the first wagon train of immigrants to Los Angeles from the east.

He is an ancestor of Eugene Biscailuz and of a latter-day Jesse D. Hunter who became a colorful Los Angeles district attorney.

Tough sailing: no water

STONEHAM, Mass. AP — The unscheduled "launching" of a 24-foot boat damaged two automobiles and sent a motorist to the hospital.

When Ulrich G. LaChapelle Jr., 32, lost control of his car, it bounced off a utility pole, shot into a driveway and plowed into a cradle-trailer on which the boat was being built.